

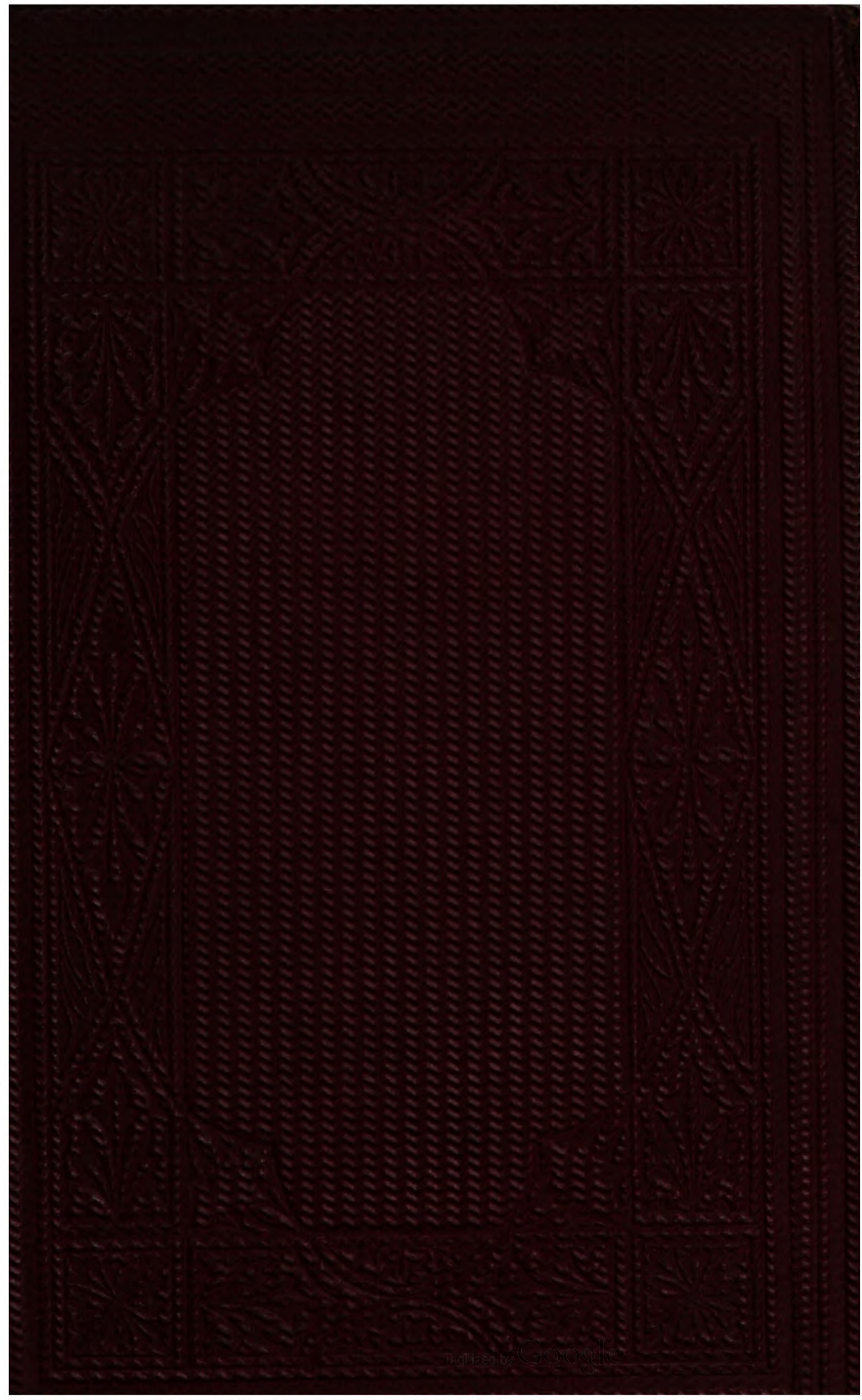
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# Faith and Reason:

OR,

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM.

BY THE

ABBÉ MARTINET.

*Translated from the French.*

"Is it not time for the Divine Philosophy of Faith to supersede Faith  
in Human Philosophy?"

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## TO THE READER.

A COMPARISON of the following pages with the original will discover the omission of one long and of several short passages.

The author, who wrote at the rise of that revolutionary excitement which still agitates Europe, had introduced some political reflections, which it appeared to the Translator would now be better omitted. These suppressions, however, do not at all interfere with the value of the work.

The chief aim of the Translator has been to present the Author's ideas in pure and simple English, and, avoiding technicalities as far as practicable, to preserve the ease and perspicuity of the original.

The Translator feels deeply grateful to the learned Author and to the zealous Bishop of Annecy, both of whom have most kindly condescended to sanction and encourage this attempt.

It is the Translator's earnest prayer that these pages may prove widely useful : but if in the hands of Divine Providence they become the means of converting or of preserving from error but one soul, the labour bestowed on them will be amply rewarded.

THE TRANSLATOR.



# THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM.

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## PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS.

### QUESTION THE FIRST.

WHETHER THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM POSSESSES THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

*Ques.*—What connection can there be between Philosophy and the Catholic Catechism?

*Ans.*—The aim of Philosophy has always been to bestow upon man true wisdom, or universal knowledge. In fact, a truly wise man would be one who, soaring above our ordinary prejudices and weaknesses, should regulate his conduct solely by the pure light of truth and justice. We are also promised the same boon by the Catholic Catechism; for these two words, *Catholic Catechism*, which are derived from the Greek, signify *universal instruction*. To enlighten man upon every useful subject is, therefore, the aim both of Philosophy and of the Catholic Catechism. In the result, there is some difference.

Although Philosophy began its work some centuries before the appearance of the Catholic Catechism, and has enlisted in its service many highly gifted men, it does not seem to have as yet made war upon human ignorance with much success. From the days of Thales of Miletus, and Pythagoras of Samos, who founded our earliest schools of Philosophy more than two thousand years ago, how many schools of Philosophy have existed and died away in Europe! They have all in turn risen and prospered; and have all produced eminent teachers, who have filled innumerable bulky folios with their lucubrations. Nevertheless, when we examine what errors philosophers have eradicated, and what truths they have discovered, it becomes

apparent that the whole result of their labours, if written down, would not cover a square inch of paper. In the midst of endless contests, some denying what others assert, and some asserting what others deny, disputing to-day the truth of what they regarded as certain yesterday, the non-Christian philosophers are still, as in the days of Thales and Pythagoras, discussing the preliminary questions: *What is truth? What is virtue?* If they have succeeded at all in teaching, they have taught men to doubt every truth, to despise all teaching, and to make no difference between truth and error, virtue and vice!\* Now when a nation has arrived at such a pass, it must cease to exist.

Fortunately for the nations of Europe, they have for the last eighteen hundred years, been in possession of a little book which throws a most wonderful light upon every thing that false philosophy has rendered obscure, and *which answers every question interesting to mankind*. This praise was lately bestowed upon the Catholic Catechism by a philosopher who no longer believed in it.†

That a few pages should contain all the truths necessary for man to know, is alone a great deal. But that the greatest clearness should be joined to the utmost conciseness, and the book be adapted to the meanest capacity, must seem to verge on

\* Among the innumerable confessions of this fact which have been made by our non-Christian philosophers, let us bring forward that of M. Pierre Leroux: "From my childhood," says he, "I have opened your books, O Philosophers! I have studied them for twenty years. Never were greater confusion and discord beheld at the Tower of Babel. In the midst of all our systems, nothing is certain, but the uncertainty of every thing.—*Revue Indépendante*. Vol. I.

† There is a little book which is learnt by children, and on which they are questioned at the Church: read this little book, which is the Catechism, and you will there find an answer to all the questions I have propounded; to all, without exception. Ask a Christian what was the origin of man—he knows; whither man is going—he knows; how he is going—he knows. Ask that poor child, who has never at all studied the subject, why he has been placed in this world, and what will become of him after death; and he will make you a truly sublime answer . . . . . Question him concerning the origin of the world, of matter, and of the human race, the destiny of man in this world and in the next—the connexion of man with God, the duties of man in relation to his fellow-creatures, the rights of man over all created things—he knows all; and when he is grown up he will be equally well informed concerning the natural, political and general rights of man, for such knowledge proceeds clearly and, as it were, naturally, from Christianity. This is what I call a Great Religion—and I recognise it by this sign, that it leaves unanswered none of the questions which interest mankind.—M. Jouffroy, *Mélanges Philosophiques*, p. 424.

the impossible, at least in Philosophic estimation. We see, in fact, that the self-styled sages of antiquity did not believe it possible to initiate the generality of mankind into wisdom. Pythagoras, who was venerated as an oracle by his contemporaries, had never more than four or five hundred disciples, all sworn to the strictest secrecy. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Cicero, Seneca, &c., although less exclusive, only confided their doctrine to a chosen band, and considered the bulk of the people and the innumerable crowd of slaves totally incapable of true wisdom. Even in the present day, a course of Philosophy is accessible only to a scarcely perceptible minority, so great are the preparatory studies required from those who desire to enter upon it.

In short, human Philosophy, the pride of which is as great as its conscious poverty, has always declared itself to be *the privilege of the few*.

Far different has been the conduct of the authors of the Catholic Catechism. Faithful to the order of their Divine Master: *Go teach all nations . . . .* they have made it their aim to create (and they have actually created) nations of wise men, who are ignorant of nothing that man should know. Communicating the same knowledge to the little and to the great, they have taught the humblest of the humble to judge the most important matters with as much wisdom as kings in their councils, and with even more, when it happens that kings and councils forget their Catechism.

You see, therefore, that the Catholic Catechism, whether considered in its end, or in its mode of attaining that end, is equally deserving of the name of Philosophy. It is in fact, pre-eminently the art of instructing man in true wisdom.

*Ques.*—I willingly allow that the Catholic Catechism gives an answer to all the questions that can interest mankind, and that these answers are intelligible to the commonest mind. But are these answers always, nay often, philosophical, that is to say, capable of convincing a man who will not admit anything without sufficient reason?

*Ans.*—Yes; there is not in the Catholic Catechism one single answer which cannot be supported by reasons sufficient to convince any sound and honest mind; as will hereafter be shown. Your question being a general one, I shall confine myself at present to an answer founded upon a general observation.

You know, the Catholic Catechism has long exercised unbounded sway in Europe. The reception its doctrines met with on their first appearance was far from promising such success.



From the time of Nero to that of Constantine, more than thirty Cæsars laboured to exterminate what was then styled *the detestable superstition of the East*. Nevertheless, after the lapse of two centuries and-a-half of the most frightful persecution, the Catechism had so filled the Empire with Christians, that even the Emperors themselves were brought to learn it.

The barbarians who destroyed the western empire, and of whom some were heretics, and some pagans, likewise attempted to drown the Catholic Catechism in the blood of the Catholics; but the Catechism rose to the surface, overcame barbarians and barbarism, and from the sixth to the sixteenth century, was the common law of Europe, the universal rule of faith and morals for the great and for the little, for the wise and for the ignorant.

Between the years 1520 and 1540, a great religious Revolution took place in the West. Luther, Zuinglius and Calvin, seconded by a certain number of princes and nobles, succeeded in imposing upon near fifty millions of Europeans new Catechisms, which ought naturally to have superseded the old one every where, on account of the immense concessions made by them to what was styled *the spirit of the age*. Nevertheless, what is the result? These famous Catechisms, for the triumph of which all Europe was set in a blaze for the space of a century, have undergone so many changes and erasures, that the original text is only to be found in old books almost forgotten. Very few Protestant ministers would be able to tell what was the belief of the original followers of the Reformation; and would any one of those who knew these ancient articles of belief, undertake to revive them?

But the Catholic Catechism always remains the same, inflexibly declaring those very truths, which, before they endured the attacks of Protestantism, had outstood all the fury of the masters of the world and of pagan philosophy.

It is now more than a century since modern philosophy, the offspring of heresy, came to the assistance of its parent. Nothing was wanting for the furtherance of its well known project of at once putting an end to the Gothic and barbarous superstitions of Catholicism. From 1750 to 1800 it led forward in battle array men of the most splendid talents—intellects renowned for science and literature, and nearly all the great statesmen. Finally, it reigned, during ten years, over the eldest of the Catholic kingdoms, and had power to punish every act of Catholicism with death.

And yet with all its scientific, literary and political renown, with its running fire of sophistry and sarcasm, and its sentences

of exile and destruction ; what advantages has modern philosophy gained in its furious war against the Catholic Catechism ? Is not the Catechism still the basis of the religious instruction which is given every week from two hundred thousand pulpits to crowded congregations ? Is it not the first book placed in the hands of children, and the only book possessed by countless families ? Is it not the only book believed by thousands of every class, who are ready to defend it, at the price of the greatest sacrifices ?

It is true the enemies of the Church, by plundering her, have diminished her means of religious instruction, and by demoralising men's minds, have made great numbers desert the school of the Catholic Catechism ; that is to say, where ignorance has triumphed, there infidelity has proportionably increased. The proof is, that even where unbelief has taken deepest root, Catholicism has but to employ means of persuasion for only a few days, to regain its sway over the minds of men. This has been frequently seen in those religious visits and exercises, known under the name of *missions* or *retreats*. It was the sight of the effects produced by recent Catholic missions in Germany, which forced the celebrated Protestant Menzel to exclaim "How powerful must be Catholic teaching which is able to destroy in one fortnight a whole century of unbelief!"\*

Let us sum up all in this great historical fact : of all the books that have appeared in Europe during the last eighteen hundred years, the Catholic Catechism has undoubtedly met with the most opposition, and undergone the longest and most terrible trials. This was to be expected ; for no book has imposed such restraint upon the passions of man. Nevertheless it has been, and is, every where received, and even at the present time no philosophical work can compete with it in the number and the respectability of its adherents.

Does it not follow that this book must be really worthy of credit, and grounded on satisfactory arguments ?

*Ques.*—The Catholic Catechism certainly has been, and still is, believed in by many ;—but does it form philosophers, that is to say, men with minds sufficiently enlightened to understand what they believe, and give reasons for their faith ?

*Ans.*—Yes, certainly ; and one proof of it will be found in the faith of the fifty Catholic generations that have gone before us. Would these millions of men have blindly adopted a religion,

\* See the fragments of Menzel on the Catholic missions, in *The education of Man*, p. 318 and following.

the profession of which was for so many ages a sentence of death, and which has never ceased saying to its followers : Mortify your pride, and crucify your flesh? Must not those Catholic doctrines, which have been defended by so many men of superior intellect, explained in so many thousand books, symbolised by so many talented artists in countless numbers of monuments which still excite our admiration, have shed some degree of light on the mind?

A second proof will be found in all Catholics throughout the world, who are well instructed in their faith. Question any children who have been taught their catechism, and you will see, as M. Jouffroy says, that they have clear, distinct, connected ideas upon the deepest subjects, *ideas which leave unanswered none of the great questions which are interesting to mankind.*

A third proof will be furnished in the course of this work. An explicit statement of the doctrines of the Catechism will, I hope, convince you that they are easy of comprehension even on the deepest subjects. An examination of the foundations on which their certainty rests, will make you feel the truth of these words of Tertullian to the Emperors of Rome: *the Christian faith need fear nothing but the judgment of ignorance.\**

## QUESTION THE SECOND.

WHETHER THE PLAN OF THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM HAS BECOME SO ANTIQUATED THAT THE RATIONALIST PLAN SHOULD TAKE ITS PLACE.

*Ques.*—You have proved that the Catholic Catechism has diffused much knowledge; but does that knowledge include philosophy sufficient to satisfy the present requirements of the mind of man? Some deny, and many doubt it.

*Ans.*—And what reason can you assign for these doubts and denials?

*Ques.*—The following: The Catechism rests upon divine revelation, and simply assigns the authority of God speaking through the Church, as the guarantee of the truth of its doctrines. Philosophy, on the contrary, appeals to reason alone, and rests only upon proofs produced by profound discussion. The Catholic

\* Apology, ch. I.

plan, originally necessary for the education of the people, may possibly not suffice in these days, when men, tired of believing upon testimony, desire to see with their own eyes, and test the oracles of their ancient faith by the investigations of science.

*Ans.*—Such are certainly the claims of Rationalist Philosophy, and they are as old and older than the catholic faith.

Which of the philosophers of antiquity ever opened a school without promising his disciples, that the sun of reason was about to rise upon them and surround them with the bright light of evidence? And later, when the Sun of Christianity had formed a greater number of true sages in the smallest towns of the East and of the West, than ever appeared in the whole of Greece, how many Masters of Philosophy have said to the children of faith: "We, and we only, are men of science; listen to us, and we will enable you to understand what you now blindly believe!" Similar were the promises of those innumerable sectarians of the first ages, who styled themselves *gnostics*, that is to say, *wise men*; and such also has been the boast of all the heresiarchs, both great and small, who have succeeded one another from Arius to Luther, and from Luther to the present founders of the most obscure sects. All have proclaimed the sufficiency of the human mind; and have declared that theirs was the mission to raise it from the darkness of faith, into the effulgence of knowledge.

The claims, therefore, of our Rationalists want even the recommendation of novelty. Let us now prove that, if such pretensions were excusable in the philosophers of antiquity, they are simply ridiculous at the present day.

In the age of Thales and Pythagoras, when the half savage inhabitants of Europe were a prey to the grossest errors, all intelligent minds capable of observation and reflection could not avoid perceiving the vanity and folly of the common belief. It is not surprising that, emboldened by having advanced thus far, and discovered a few secondary truths, they should have flattered themselves with the expectation of being able to withdraw the veil that concealed the principal questions of science. What else could be expected? It was natural for beginners to be presumptuous, and half instructed scholars have ever been the warmest admirers of human wisdom.

But in these days, when we have before our eyes the exact result of all the philosophical labours undergone by the cleverest intellects during two thousand five hundred years; in these days, when the standard bearers of Rationalist Philosophy confess that this Light of lights is still in darkness, and that this

Science of sciences has not yet ascertained its precise object,\* is it a mark of good sense to tell us that the Catholic method has become antiquated, that it should be superseded by philosophy, and that men are now sufficiently enlightened to decide everything upon evidence alone?

Is it not most incredibly absurd to invite two hundred millions of Catholics to despise the answers of the Catechism in order to listen to those of philosophy, which are reducible to—"I know nothing;" and to pretend that each individual will be able, in a few years and by the sole light of reason, to discover those fundamental truths, which the most profound reasoners of the world have sought for in vain during two thousand five hundred years?

*Ques.*—No doubt, philosophy can find nothing in antiquity to justify its contempt of faith; but does not the wonderful progress made by the mind of man in modern times afford it some grounds of hope for the future? Had a man foretold in the year 1750, that before a century elapsed the inhabitants of the opposite extremities of Europe would be able to communicate with each other in the space of a few minutes, and even meet in less than a week, would he not have been regarded as a visionary and a madman? Should not the realisation of such marvels impose silence on those who defy human reason to solve problems which have hitherto baffled it?

*Ans.*—Do you mean to confound the problems of religion and morality with such physical problems as the electric telegraph and the steam engine? Many are the ways in which they differ from each other; but I beg you to observe the following in particular:—The powers employed in the telegraph and the steam-engine exist in nature, they required therefore only to be discovered, not created. The learned had long been studying the properties of the electric fluid, and had considered steam to be a motive power.† The art of communicating with one another from afar off, by means of signals, which was known to the ancients, had suggested to men of modern times the idea of *writing from a distance (telegraph)*, which idea was realised by the Brothers Chappe, at the end of the last century. Men

\* "The precise object of this science (philosophy), has not yet been determined, and that is why all the attempts of Aristotle, Bacon, and Descartes, to reform philosophy, properly so called, have failed." M. Jouffroy, in the *Ecrit posthume*, published by M. P. Leroux in the *Revue Indépendante*, Nov. 1st, 1842.

† See in the *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes* for 1829, the *Notice* of M. Arago on *Steam-engines*.

likewise knew, that to accelerate the speed of a carriage or vessel, it was necessary only to increase the force of the impulse, and diminish that of the resistance.

These various data naturally led men to see whether this electric fluid, with which we can produce such marvellous effects at distances so great, might not be made to transmit the material signs of thought; and whether steam, which has sufficient force in itself to raise a person into the air, could not be made to accelerate our speed in moving along the ground and on the water. In one word, previous discoveries paved the way for these magnificent inventions, and we may say, that both problems were solved from the day they were first proposed.

Such is not the case with the famous philosophical problem : *To prove by the sole light of human reason what was the primary and final cause of everything that exists, and particularly of man.* For many ages it has been clearly stated, and eagerly debated by a hundred schools of philosophy, and has not yet advanced a single step towards solution. We have constantly advanced, and may expect to continue to advance in the arts; that is to say, in the knowledge and use of the powers of nature; because, from the very beginning, men have had some elementary knowledge of these natural powers, and the knowledge we possess always leads us to acquire further knowledge. But what discoveries have men made in metaphysics? None whatever. And since nothing can come of nothing, the chance of future discoveries is reduced to nought; and the progress we make in the study of the material universe only serves to prove still farther how powerless we are in the intellectual world.

Nay, more. The problem as proposed by the Rationalist philosophers is an absurdity, and can be seriously discussed only by persons who do not understand its terms.

*Ques.*—What do you mean?

*Ans.*—Weigh well the words of the problem : *To prove by the sole light of human reason what is the primary and final cause of all beings, and particularly of man.*

*To prove* is to place a proposition or a fact in such a light as to produce conviction. Now, in this case, what has to be proved? *What is the primary and final cause, &c.* Therefore, in the first place, the following little questions must be clearly answered, without leaving any room for doubt. Has the world always been, and will it continue always to be, such as we now see it? If it is eternal, give us an unanswerable reason for the fact of its eternity. If it has had a beginning, and is to have an end, or to undergo some change, show us clearly when and

how it began to exist, and when and how it will come to an end, or be changed. If you cannot disperse the clouds which obscure these questions, it is of the utmost importance that you should at least speedily and unanswerably decide the following :—What was the origin, and what is the final destination of the human race, and of the individuals who compose it? Whence do we come? Whither are we going? and what path are we to follow whilst allured on all sides by thousands of interior and exterior voices, which call us in opposite directions? and what is to give clear and decisive answers to all these things? *The sole light of human reason.* Now, human reason being merely an abstraction when not taken in connection with human individuals, it must be of you and of me or of whoever desires to be a philosopher, that a luminous and conclusive solution of these problems is demanded. Neither you nor I can tell when and how the first or the last of the hairs of our head began to grow, nor foretell when and how it will fall, and yet Rationalism expects us to state exactly when and how every thing began, and when and how every thing will end. The entire light of reason is insufficient to dispel the clouds which surround our infancy, and we are utterly ignorant of the earliest deeds of our childhood; still Rationalism expects that we should raise the veil that covers the beginning and the end of the world, the source and the destination of all created beings.

Was I not justified in saying that the problem of Rationalist philosophy is an absurdity if you only understand its terms?

*Ques.*—If Rationalism errs through excessive confidence in the light of reason, and expects too much from it, does not Catholicism, on the other hand, fall into the opposite extreme? Does it not undervalue our intellectual powers by saying to us: God has spoken; believe, and do not reason?

*Ans.*—Until the exposition of the doctrines of the Catholic Church has shown you the wide field opened for reflection and thought by the Catechism, I propose to your consideration the following two arguments, which being grounded upon facts clear as the light of the sun, prove the folly of the old calumny that the Catholic faith weakens the mind.

I. It is admitted that Christian nations have far surpassed all non-Christian nations in their social institutions, as well as in all branches of human knowledge. Nor is it less notorious that to Catholicism are all Christian nations indebted for their instruction. It is therefore only just to acknowledge that the Catholic system does not leave our minds in darkness.

II. The strength and greatness of our minds are proportioned

to the extent and solidity of their knowledge, just as their weakness may be recognised by the absence of fixed ideas upon any subject. Now, it is a certain fact, that all well instructed Catholics have the firmest possible convictions and ideas upon all philosophical questions, and it is not less certain that Rationalists, by their own confession, have no convictions upon anything, and that of all the questions they have propounded, not one has received a satisfactory answer. Therefore, when Rationalism accuses the Catholic faith of undervaluing the mind of man, it is ignorance saying to knowledge, "Thou art blind!" and night saying to day, "Thou hast no light!"

*Ques.*—In reply to this argument, Rationalism might bring forward the saying of the most illustrious philosopher of antiquity, Socrates, who, when questioned concerning what he had learned by philosophy, was accustomed to answer: "I have learnt to know that I know nothing." Is it not something to become conscious of our own ignorance?

*Ans.*—If you know that you know nothing, why, in the name of common sense, do you teach? What unjustifiable presumption to constitute yourselves masters of every branch of science, when you are conscious of your own ignorance! and Rationalists are condemned not only by their own words, but still more by the example of the philosophers to whom they appeal. Socrates and Plato acknowledged how insufficient was the light of reason to penetrate the mysteries of universal knowledge and of man's destiny; but instead of stopping at this point, they argued therefrom the necessity of divine instruction, and exhorted their disciples to expect it from the goodness of the Deity. Such was the conduct of these illustrious thinkers at a period when Greece barely retained a confused remembrance of primitive Revelation. At the present day, when the inhabitants of Europe have been surrounded for so many ages by the bright light of Christianity, what line of conduct is pursued by our professors of Rationalist philosophy? They are constantly deceiving youth, by representing reason to be *the light of lights, the highest authority, and the only authority*. If by chance they mention the Revelation of the Gospel, it is but to load it with senseless abuse.

*Ques.*—The Rationalists will likewise say, that as Revelation is supernatural, a philosopher ought to leave it to the theologian and confine himself to the study of natural science.

*Ans.*—If the Rationalists are desirous of confining themselves to the study of natural science, let them employ themselves in



studying the art of manuring, ploughing and sowing our fields, of improving cattle, &c.; but let them beware of discussing such problems as those of the origin and destiny of the universe and the human race. These problems evidently do not belong to the list of the subjects which we naturally understand, and to expect a solution of them from reason alone, is about as sensible as to expect to touch the sun, moon, and stars, with our hands.

That you may clearly comprehend the respective merits of the Catholic and Rationalist methods, I will compare them with each other in a few words.

The question is to find the key of universal knowledge, and clearly understand the first and last cause of the existence of the world, and of the human race.

What road does Rationalist philosophy command you to follow? Consult, it says, your reason, and question nature, for these are the only sources of light worth the attention of philosophy! That is to say: seek universal knowledge in your own mind, for it must be there; and if, by chance, your search is unsuccessful, you have but to seek it in nature, namely, in the stars, animals, plants, and stones. What is the method proposed by Catholic philosophy? It says to you: Universal knowledge pertains alone to the Author of all things, and he who has made us can alone tell why he made us. Since we are ever ignorant of the secret thoughts of our fellow men unless they confide them to us, how much more must we be ignorant of the thoughts of God about the destiny of created beings, so long as he does not reveal them to us. Now God has revealed his thoughts concerning mankind, through Christ. If you have any doubts about this fact, which has triumphed over the incredulity of the world, disperse them by studying the history of Christianity.

Examine these two methods attentively, and then tell me, your hand on your heart, which of them speaks the language of reason, and of philosophical good sense?

*Ques.*—No doubt, here lies the question: Does Christianity really tell us the thoughts of God? and you must own that to be an important question.

*Ans.*—Not only is it an important question, but the only question remaining to be examined. When we have recognised the existence of a Supreme Ruler of all things, who has subjected to fixed laws the entire Creation, from the stars of Heaven to the smallest insect, we can no longer avoid asking the question: Has God given a law to man? and what is that

law? Here, as the whole Christian world, backed by forty-five generations of witnesses, stands forth to proclaim as a fact, the existence of a divinely revealed law, a real philosopher must feel himself compelled to enter upon a profound investigation of this fact.

Entirely to pass over an event which has wrought a total change in the most enlightened and intelligent nations of the universe, or to imagine that it can, by ridicule, be rendered incredible and unworthy of investigation would certainly be to inculcate contempt of God, of man, and of that human reason of which our philosophers style themselves the high-priests.

Yet such is invariably the method of our rationalists. Since you repeat their objections with some accuracy, I must suppose you to be acquainted with their writings.

Tell me, then, whether, in the numerous effusions of MM. Cousin, Jouffroy, Damiron, Pierre Leroux, &c., you have found any semblance of a serious and conscientious discussion of the historical grounds upon which Christianity rests? Have these able critics even attempted to explain how Jesus Christ, if only a philosopher or a visionary, succeeded in persuading his first disciples that he was the true Messiah, the God-Man who was born, and died, and rose again for the salvation of the world; how these disciples were so firmly convinced that they had seen what, according to the Rationalist hypothesis, they had not seen, as to face death itself, in order to impart a similar conviction to their contemporaries; how these poor dupes succeeded in making other dupes, and such incorrigible ones too, that Christian blood never ceased flowing for two centuries and a half; how the deception succeeded so well, that the Roman empire, after having exerted its whole strength in combatting, ended at last by adopting it, and by making the laws and institutions of Christianity co-ordinate with its own; how the barbarian conquerors of the Roman empire, eager as they were for its destruction, embraced the incredible and irksome religion of their conquered foes, which religion became from that time the soul of the modern universe; how this religion, which degrades the intellect, and is an object of scorn to *esprits forts*, has elevated the reason of Europeans to such a height, and ever produces learned men capable of crushing all the objections of these same *esprits forts*,—martyr apostles to preach it to the infidel,—sisters of charity to devote themselves to the service of those very men who blaspheme it, etc.

I ask; have your Rationalist friends even alluded to these problems of history? Have they regarded these facts which have shaken and transformed the world, in any other light than as fic-

tions, poetical ideas, rude and popular myths which philosophy must destroy?\*

*Ques.*—I do not think that any Rationalist writers have ever seriously studied Christianity in an historical point of view. Filled with respect for its past glories, but disgusted at its doctrines as now taught, they are in quest of some new support for society, which is tottering from its original foundations. M. Jouffroy expressed the sentiments of his class in his *Mélanges philosophiques*, when speaking of *the problem* of man's destiny; he said: "Do you believe that in the present day a solution can be offered to the bulk of the people, as being a revelation? . . . . As far as I am concerned, gentlemen, I strongly incline to a negative . . . . There remains then, in my opinion, but one means of coming to the assistance of society, and that is to discuss philosophically these problems of which a solution must necessarily be given, etc."

*Ans.*—Yes; these gentlemen flatter themselves that they shall be able to overturn Christianity without the slightest difficulty. But nothing offers so obstinate a resistance as a fact, and when a fact has outlasted eighteen centuries, embraces the whole earth, and fills every page of modern history, do you not think it will be able to resist the puny efforts of the pedants whom it annoys?

Even if Catholicism were as declining as its Rationalist foes are pleased to imagine, the fact would not be less undeniable, that it has imparted its life for a long space of time to the Christian universe; and consequently the philosopher would find himself in a little dilemma.

The Catholic faith is necessarily founded either on truth or on error. If it is really what it styles itself, the work of God, it would be criminal and foolish alike in us to wish to substitute anything in its place. How would it be possible to say to the Author of life: The law which thou hast given us no longer suits our taste; allow us to put it aside! If it is, on the contrary, the work of ignorance and deceit, its incredible success is surely enough to make us despair of the human mind, and to silence all those who boast of the light of reason. When men have gone so sadly astray, how can you flatter yourself with a hope of converting them to truth, without at least pointing out the cause of their long enslavement to error?

\* "God must have drawn nigh to man, and revealed himself to him," says M. Damiron, "but it does not follow that He must have taken a human body, or have become incarnate under any form. *All that has been said on that subject is merely figurative and poetical.*" *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie*, p. 388. "The redemption and mediation of Christ belong to that class of myths, symbols, and figures which the light of philosophy will soon destroy." M. Jouffroy, *Mélanges philosophiques*, pp. 185, et 495.

You see, therefore, that an examination of the historical records of Christianity is philosophically unavoidable. What must we think of those who, avoiding this question entirely, tell us, with M. Jouffroy and his colleagues : It being evident that society, which has been heretofore nourished by the doctrine of Christ, now loaths that food, it is high time that we, professors of theology, and you, our scholars, should furnish it with teaching superior to that of Christianity. It is true, that notwithstanding all our labour and those of our predecessors, we have not yet succeeded in finding materials for a satisfactory answer to any one of the many questions which interest mankind ; but let us not lose courage. Let us philosophically discuss these formidable problems, and throw sufficient light upon them to make all those nations which desert the school of Christ enter ours, and proclaim us the saviours of mankind !

To pretend that this is philosophy is clearly to justify those words of Pascal, that " contempt of philosophy is the beginning of wisdom."

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### QUESTION THE THIRD.

WHETHER THERE IS ANY ACCEPTABLE MEDIUM BETWEEN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM AND THAT OF RATIONALISM.

*Ques.*—On a nearer inspection, I see that the promise of throwing more light upon the problem of man's destiny than is afforded by Catholicism, might very possibly be intended only as a pretext by the Rationalist philosophers. Their real aim might be to secure to every one liberty of thought, and induce Catholics, and those who belong not to their faith, to come to a mutual understanding, no longer anathematising each other, either in the name of faith, or of reason. Now would not such be a wise medium ? No doubt you are aware that this is the philosophy of a large number of good men. Not approving of the antiquated revelations of the Catholic Catechism, and hoping nothing from the future revelations of Rationalism, they have adopted this motto : " Let us peacefully enjoy life, without wearying our brains in penetrating its mysteries."

*Ans.*—You are right in thinking that Rationalism is but a pretext. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of its followers de-

mand liberty in matters of religion only for the sake of enjoying the liberty of thinking of no religion at all, except that of pleasure. What they covet is the philosophy of neutrality and of epicurism. But this philosophy, which appears so easy because it requires no study, is in fact impracticable, because society, in its present state of organisation, can endure only a few epicures, and not one neutral.

It is evident that the number of men of pleasure, who are so satisfied with the enjoyments naturally falling to their lot here below as not to seek more elsewhere, must be very insignificant. The expenses of the most moderate require a tolerably good income; and you know that society abounds with philosophers of this kind, who with the most ample resources have involved themselves in debt and in ruin.

How then is it possible to multiply the race of epicures, when we know by the statistics of the revenue of all Europe, that were it equally divided among the inhabitants of that continent, each individual would have only about twelve or fourteen pounds yearly? Nothing can be more incompatible with the philosophy of luxury than labour and privation, yet such is the condition of the immense majority of mankind.

It is equally certain that there are no men existing who are really neutral, that is to say, who can behold Christianity face to face without emotions either of love or of hatred. There are two things which may cause men to delude themselves on this point.

1. The spirit of heresy has produced imitations of the Christian law, so bare of arguments and precepts, as to be neither very trying to those who adopt them, nor productive of much anxiety to those who reject them. The former find them too easy to care much about inquiring into their origin; the latter think them too weak to be worth the trouble of confutation. Men tolerate even their intolerance, much for the same reason that we bear with the crying of a child. But this peace, which arises from the intercourse of one error with another, disappears the moment Catholic Christianity makes its appearance. Its unchangeable dogmas, and the marks of its Divine origin, soon drive all who refuse to submit into open rebellion.

2. Catholic countries abound in men who, with believing minds but frail hearts, would wish to reconcile their frailties with their belief, and negotiate a treaty of peace such as would preserve their faith from the outrages of incredulity, and their sins from the incessant reproofs of religion. This is being weak and inconsistent, but not indifferent. The very struggles which

these men have with themselves prove to them that no compromise can be made with Him who has said : *You cannot serve two Masters*. Hence, sooner or later, their faith must deliver them from their vices, or their vices will turn them from their faith.

In short, there are many men indifferent to false Christianities, but true Christianity has none but friends or enemies.

*Ques.*—It is precisely this obstinate determination of Catholicism to possess absolute power in matters of faith which the partizans of a middle course consider the great cause of all the evil. They think that if the zeal of the children of faith were moderated, all parties might be reconciled.

*Ans.*—This idea of conciliation is founded upon total ignorance of the human heart, and of the nature of Catholicism. The Catholic faith being, according to the firm conviction of those who profess it, the work of God, can never be altered or reformed. No one can change an iota in it without arrogating to himself the place of God. Whilst forbidding its followers to change or leave unnoticed any portion of its doctrines, the Catholic faith obliges every one, to whom it is preached, to become either a believer or an opponent. Its positive, urgent, formidable affirmations can only be opposed by formal denials, which are so much the more passionate in proportion as they are unfounded on reason. When once passion enters the lists, war ensues, a war which never ends. Pride is an immortal soldier, whom wounds and defeats only serve to irritate. It fights with every description of weapon, proceeds from sophistry to raillery, from raillery to outrage, and from outrage to the most brutal violence. Never does it say, "I yield." The Divine wisdom in person would be repulsed now, as formerly by the Scribes and Pharisees, who after having exhausted both false arguments and abuse, had recourse to the last argument of pride : "Let us crucify him !" A similar argument has always been made use of against the Catholic Catechism by Anti-Catholicism of every description.

Nothing can be more impossible than any agreement between faith and infidelity. You never will be able to persuade a sincere Catholic not to look upon all errors opposed to his religious convictions as great evils, from which he ought to make every effort to preserve those entrusted to his charge, and to deliver his brethren ; neither will you ever be able to persuade an irreligious man not to look upon the Catholic religion as an enemy which persecutes him by its very presence.

The former, tranquil in his religious belief, and faithful to the duty of charity, will endeavour to overcome evil with good, and will oppose the sarcasms and contempt of the unbeliever only by

patience ; the latter, thinking as ill of men as of God, will still persist incorrigibly in the habit of fancying that he has enemies on every side, and is ever the victim of persecution. Attempt to dispel his ignorance and prejudices on religious matters, and you are intolerant ; keep silence, and he accuses you of condemning him to eternal torments, and of wishing to recall the times when unbelievers were burnt. If you answer that God is the Judge of souls, and that none but seditious unbelievers who preached rebellion were burnt in the middle ages, he will still persist in thinking himself persecuted. And he is right in one sense ; for the presence of light is always painful to irreligion, which thrives only in darkness.

*Ques.*—But is not this incompatibility of Catholicism with any other religion the cause of much disturbance in kingdoms, and of fearful dissensions among Christian people, so as almost to make us envy the position of the nations of Asia, less enlightened in religious matters, but likewise far more tolerant ?

*Ans.*—I cannot understand how you can throw the blame of our religious dissensions upon that Catholic Church which so entirely forbids them, and which still preserves two-thirds of the Christian family in unity of faith. Neither can I see how she would prevent our religious differences by swerving from her path of religious orthodoxy, that is to say, by allowing her children to divide into as many sects as there are individuals mad enough to found new religions.

With regard to that religious tolerance which you gratuitously ascribe to the people of Asia, I will merely make one remark. To enjoy the same blissful peace as them, you must, in the first place, adopt their religious and political system, which is remarkably simple. Let the inhabitants of Europe, to the number of more than two hundred millions, engage to observe the following regulations : “The Sovereign is absolute master of our property, liberty, honour, and lives. He can dispose of them as he pleases, carry away our wives and children to fill his harems, or be exposed for sale, and send us an order to strangle ourselves, or have our heads cut off ; and all without incurring any responsibility, even before God, considering that we regard him as a god himself.”

If we conscientiously observed such a constitution as this, our religious differences would soon cease ; but should we enjoy the more tranquility ? Consult the history of the world before the Christian Era, and what will you find ? An uninterrupted series of plunders and massacres, not of one army by another, but of one nation by another, from the earliest known conquerors down

to the masters of the earth, who monopolised the right of pillaging and destroying all countries. Open the history of Asia, from the Hegira (622) to the days of Thamas-Kouli-Khan, who died in 1747; study the history of the wars of men like Timor, Ghenghis-Khan, Aureng-Zeb, etc., and you will witness horrors far surpassing those of our most bloody wars, whether civil or religious. This fact is owned by Montesquieu, who in his writings has undervalued the social influence of Christianity far too much, for his testimony to be considered in the slightest degree prejudiced.\*

Does it appear to you that Asia is at present enjoying perfect peace and tranquility? Remember that the inferior animals are constantly subdued in presence of the lion. Europe is that lion, ever ready for disturbances at home, but never allowing other nations to fight without leave. Having commercial interests in Asia, Europe would say to all combatants, however numerous: "Peace!—otherwise beware." And in case of disobedience, there would be no occasion for Europe to call together all her nations, as in the twelfth century, when her Christian education was as yet too imperfect for her to reap all its fruits. Any of the smaller States would possess sufficient military strength. From the ports of Lisbon, Genoa, or Amsterdam, there would sail forth little fleets perfectly capable of subduing the proudest potentates of Asia. Does not the East India Company reign without much difficulty over more than a hundred million Hindoos? When, a few years ago, the monarch of an empire, acquainted before ourselves with the use of gunpowder and of artillery, and numbering more than three hundred millions of subjects far advanced in civilization, dared to prevent English commerce from trading in the poison known under the name of *opium*, one squadron, and the landing of a few troops, were quite enough to convince the Court of Pekin that the safety of the celestial empire was endangered.

It is our strength, therefore, that maintains such tranquillity in Asia. And if our power is so great, that one of our kingdoms can make all China tremble—China, that immense continent, which possesses not only a far richer soil than that of Europe,

\* "If we call to mind the continual massacres which took place under the Greek and Roman kings and generals, on the one hand, and the innumerable nations and cities which were destroyed by Timor and Ghenghis-Khan, who devastated Asia on the other, we shall perceive that to Christianity we are indebted, in the government, for a certain political law, and in war, for a certain law of nations—benefits which mankind can never sufficiently appreciate." *De l'Esprit des Loix*, lxxiv. ch. 3.



but at least double the population, to what are we indebted for such superior strength, if not to our Christian education? Blind, indeed, must be the man who could attribute our progress to what is called *the spirit of modern times*, that is to say, to the licence of political, philosophical, and religious Rationalism.

When Christopher Columbus died in 1506, bequeathing to Spain a new world, the whole of Europe was Catholic. When, some years after, Fernando Cortez, with six hundred Spaniards, conquered Mexico, then densely populous, and far advanced in civilization, the heretical theses, which Luther was then just producing at Wittemberg, were known only to a few learned men. Thanks to religious unity, Europe was, even then, superior to the rest of the world. Even if we blame the use she made of her strength, still we must acknowledge—1st, that by her moral and material strength, she was, even then, mistress of the world; 2ndly, that if she had made such a use of that strength as was enjoined by the Spirit of the Gospel, the whole world would have been converted to Christianity by this time, at the cost of far less blood than our innovations within, and the suggestions of rivalry and avarice without, have caused to flow.

I will now say to those who are in favour of a middle course regarding creeds: You should respect the inflexibility of the Catholic faith, even had it no other advantage than that of having increased the strength of man a hundred fold, and realized in Christians these words of Scripture: *One shall pursue a thousand, and two chase ten thousand.\** But, with a little reflection, you will perceive that we have more need than ever of Catholic convictions, and that to regret their obstinacy is to regret that Europe is not yet reduced to a heap of ruins soaked in blood.

*Ques.*—You will have some trouble to persuade men of that.

*Ans.*—I am not acquainted with the art of persuading those minds, which by nature or want of reflection, are incapable of receiving the light of evidence, of reason, and of facts. As you do not belong to that class, I shall soon show you that there is not the slightest exaggeration in my saying that Europe must return to the Catholic faith, or perish. An explanation, whether true or false, of the mystery of life, is indispensably needful to all men not deprived of the use of reason. For them to pass through life in sweet and undisturbed thoughtlessness, their

\* Deut. xxxii. 30.

path should be strewn with roses without thorns, and each man should possess not only a large income, but also sufficient prudence not to consume the capital as well as the interest. Since this is totally impossible, and since the condition of the immense majority, if not of all mankind, is a daily struggle against ever recurring sufferings of both soul and body, we cannot help prying into the reasons for such a state of things. Men naturally fly from privation and suffering, and before they will resign themselves thereto, it is necessary not only to prove that privation and sufferings are inevitable, but likewise to point out their utility and aim. A remedy at present, or certain compensation in the future, is what they require. Indifference on this head may for a time be felt by a small number of epicures asleep in the lap of pleasure, but never by the immense majority of mankind.

Now there are but two explanations of the miseries of life that can be universally received: the pagan and the Christian explanation.

For non-Christian nations the explanation lies solely in the will of God or of the gods, who, having regulated all things with infinite wisdom, will bestow eternal rewards upon all who acquiesce in these regulations, and will inflict terrible punishments upon all who disturb them. If by chance there should exist any human beings rash enough to wish to censure or reform what the gods have decreed, the prince, the son of Heaven, is on the spot to execute speedy justice upon the criminals.

You must perceive that this system, wherever received, is well calculated to prevent any disturbance. Indeed, these nations would never awaken from their slumbers, were it not that the *sons of Heaven* too frequently take advantage of the prerogatives of their position. But you must likewise perceive, that such a system never could be maintained among Christian people.

The Gospel, in teaching us that God created man and the world untainted by evil, and that our works alone have been the source of our sufferings, has totally destroyed the doctrine of fatalism common to all false religions, a doctrine which, by consecrating every abuse and every evil, effectually prevents all social improvements. Not satisfied with inspiring us with a love of good and hatred of evil, the Gospel commands us to *aspire to be perfect even as our Heavenly Father is perfect*, and to labour by our prayers and good works to establish the kingdom of God by the abolition of vice and crime and by the triumph of good over evil. Hence proceeds the marvellous mental activity of Christian people, and their passion for progress, and reform

in every thing. Another great source of social activity is the dogma of our common descent from one man, of universal fraternity, and of the equality of all before God, our common Lord and Father. We unfortunately disagree much in our modes of understanding and applying Christian ideas concerning good and evil, order and disorder, perfection and abuses, and concerning social progress, equality and fraternity. But you must own that these ideas are as familiar to us as they are unknown to the infidels, and that they have made us very sensitive in all political matters, and, above all, greatly averse to whatever might tend to divide mankind anew into masters and slaves, men of pleasure and men of labour.

*Ques.*—Yes, it is certain that Christian nations are as passionately fond of change as others are of stagnancy; and this fact appears to be an objection with some to Christianity, which is accused of raising the aspirations of man too high.

*Ans.*—There can be no doubt that Christianity has raised our desires too high to please those Rationalists, who say with Feuerbach: "Enough of potatoes and women in this life, and utter extinction in the next, is all that man can require!" Still, as I have proved elsewhere, the evil is done.\* Not all the lamentations of Feuerbach (the Proudhon of Germany, as Goëthe is the Voltaire), would hinder our people from being passionately fond of change, and utterly disinclined to submit to the régime proposed by the German Punch. The people of Europe can only choose between the social regulations set on foot by the philosophy of the Catholic Catechism, and those of Socialist Republicanism, which are founded on the principles of Rationalist Philosophy.

It is to prove this fact, and to enlighten you in your choice between the two systems, that I have undertaken this abridged course of the Philosophy of the Catechism, the grounds of which I will now lay before you.

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\* See *de l'Education de l'homme*, ch. 4, 5, 6, 7.

## BOOK THE FIRST.

## THE GROUNDS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM.

*Ques.*—What do you mean by the grounds of the Philosophy of the Catholic Catechism?

*Ans.*—I allude to facts so clear and conclusive, that no one can examine them without recognising their certainty, or acknowledge their certainty without deducing from it the truth of the Catholic doctrines.

I say *clear and conclusive facts*, and not ideas, or metaphysical axioms. The evidence of metaphysical axioms appears conclusive only to a certain number of men, and never leads them on far. Philosophers, starting from the same principles, have arrived at the most opposite conclusions. True Religion, which addresses itself to all men, and desires to guide them to the same end, must reject so narrow and uncertain a basis, and ground itself upon facts capable of being ascertained by all.

*Ques.*—And what are these facts?

*Ans.*—As Christianity embraces the history of the world from its origin down to our time, and as its dogmas and precepts are, as it were, the abridgment and corollary of all that God has done for man, and all that man has done for and against God, it follows, that the grounds on which Christianity rests comprise the enormous body of the facts of its history, from Adam down to Jesus Christ, and from Jesus Christ down to us. Are these facts undoubtedly true? Do these facts impart to Christianity the marks of Divine origin? These two questions should be carefully examined by every infidel who is desirous to learn.

Such a discussion, although greatly abridged in the masterpieces of criticism by Christian Apologists, is still far beyond the abilities or inclinations of the majority of mankind, who are either too much occupied, or too careless to employ their time in long and serious study. My intention in this book is to reduce the grounds of Catholic philosophy to a small number of important facts—to disperse the clouds with which these facts have been surrounded by an ignorant or lying sophistry, and to display

them in all their native brilliancy before the eye of the reader, without having recourse to learned dissertations.

I feel sure my demands will not be deemed exorbitant, if, in order fully to prove the divine origin of Catholicism, I ask you to acknowledge these four facts: (1) the Existence of God, (2) the Existence of Jesus Christ, (3) the Existence of a Catholic Church, and (4) the Existence of man.

*Ques.*—No indeed; I even think you require too little; for most unbelievers would make no difficulty about acknowledging these four facts.

*Ans.*—Yes, they would acknowledge them without examining their truth, for these men who are ever fighting for liberty to examine every thing, generally examine nothing. Now, that is not what I expect from you. What I require of you is an enlightened conviction of the facts of the existence of God, of the existence of Jesus Christ, of the existence of a Catholic Church, and of the existence of man, and I am persuaded that the result of a careful examination and comparison of these four facts will be a complete conviction of the Divinity of the teaching of the Catholic Church.

*Ques.*—Your method will at least greatly simplify religious discussion, and render it accessible even to minds which avoid learned studies.

*Ans.*—Yes; and you will soon, I hope, perceive that unbelief is always vanquished from the moment the unbeliever is resolved to examine with a sincere heart.

To proceed.

## I. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

### CHAPTER I.

*It is the greatest blindness to doubt the Existence of God.—The Crystal Palace.*

*Ques.*—What do you mean by God?

*Ans.*—In order to avoid lengthened and scientific discussions, I will here consider God not as the Creator, but as the Ruler of the universe, and define him as follows: God is the Sovereign

Master, who has regulated, and who governs the movements of the immense family of created beings with such perfection, that during the thousands of years the mind of man has been contemplating them, new proofs have been daily discovered of the infinite wisdom of his government, and of the infinite ignorance of those who have found fault with it. Now, I ask, are you entirely convinced of the existence of this Master, and of the futility of all the reasonings of Atheism and scepticism?

*Ques.*—Yes; and my argument against them is as follows: The order which reigns in the whole universe cannot be accounted for except by the existence of a supreme Ruler; while the disorder which we fancy we discover in it can easily be explained by our ignorance.

*Ans.*—Your argument is concise and sensible; but as concise proofs, however true, are often liable to produce shortlived and unsteady convictions, I desire to bring forward a proof of the existence of God, founded upon a less cursory observation of this universal order.

When we analyse the most learned sayings and writings of atheists and sceptics, whether ancient or modern, we find the whole of their philosophy to consist in explaining all that passes in the world, and even its very existence, by the doctrine of chance, by the unknown laws, the hidden and fated powers of eternal matter.

When silenced on these points, unbelievers, whether talented or ignorant, have recourse to such foolish expressions as the following: "Let us see God, and we will believe in him."\*

To put an end to such senseless attempts at reasoning, and show how the greatest of Minds reveals itself palpably to the mind of man, we may follow this plan:

In 1851, thousands and thousands of the curious, from all quarters of the globe, went to see an immense glass Palace, which was built in one of the public Parks of London, and which was filled with a collection of the most splendid productions of human industry. By the side of ingenious machines, the offspring of the brain of learned mechanicians, of wonderfully beautiful tissues, the productions of ten thousand different kinds of manufactures, of Sèvres China, and of Gobelin Tapestry, there were exhibited the tools, pottery, and coarse fabrics of the savages of the New World, and Oceanica. So great was the

\* See in the *Essai sur la vie de Bernardin de St. Pierre*, the furious outcry that was made against the Author of *Etudes de la Nature* by his colleagues of the Institute in 1798, when he dared to pronounce there the name of God.

number of articles exhibited, that an examination of every thing, giving only one minute of time to each, could not have been accomplished in less than twenty years.

Now, suppose that on the day when the Palace was most crowded, a man with a stentorian voice, loud enough to be heard by a hundred thousand persons, had addressed them as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen! you are the victims of an extraordinary delusion. Trusting to the word of those deceivers who have induced you to assemble here, you fancy that you behold before your eyes the produce of human industry; but it is not so. The Crystal Palace itself grew out of the earth, as so many things daily do. At the sight of this mushroom of such novel appearance, the English, who speculate upon every thing, and are particularly well versed in the art of playing upon the credulity of mankind, have taken it into their heads to collect there all the most extraordinary productions of nature. Thinking that a Bazaar of Industry would interest you more than a Museum of natural curiosities, they announced in the columns of venal newspapers the opening of a *Universal Exhibition of the productions of human industry*. The deception, as you see, has been completely successful. I myself was deceived at first; but on a nearer examination, my eyes were opened. Do as I have done, ladies and gentlemen, let a careful examination take the place of unreasoning faith, and in this enormous collection of things you will not find one that exhibits marks of the labour and invention of man. There is nothing here which cannot be explained by the known and unknown powers of nature; no, not one single thing, not even that machine which you see working there on the left, near the principal entrance; to ask the name of the man, who has endowed that great mass of wood, iron, steel, and copper, with the property of taking hold of raw cotton, and changing it into cloth after going through five and twenty or thirty sufficiently ingenious processes, would be as unphilosophical a proceeding as to wish to discover the man who bestowed upon the bark of the Quinquina the property of arresting the progress of fever."

Now what effect do you think such a theory, propounded gravely enough to prevent its being taken as a joke, would have had on that enormous auditory?

*Ques.*—There would, I think, have been a unanimous cry for such a madman to be taken back to the madhouse, from which he must have escaped.

*Ans.*—No doubt, by one of those infallible decrees, which common sense extorts without any need of consideration from

the wise and ignorant alike, this man would have been declared to be the blindest of the blind, or the most foolish of fools. I will then show that the Atheist, Pantheist, and Sceptic, who do not, or will not see in the Palace of *the Exhibition of the Universe* the proofs of the existence of a mind infinitely superior to that of man, are thousands and millions of times blinder, and more worthy of being consigned to a madhouse or prison.

You will doubtless allow that our earth is as nothing, compared with the innumerable orbs surrounding it in the Heavens, that the largest of our kingdoms is but small compared with the whole surface of the globe; that a spot of land as large as Hyde Park, where the Crystal Palace was built, is but an imperceptible fraction of the entire territory of Great Britain; and finally, that a square yard of land is but a very minute portion of this park itself. Nevertheless, I maintain that in one square yard of the land of Hyde Park, we shall find works of skill and power far superior to those of the Crystal Palace.

*Ques.*—That is rather like a paradox.

*Ans.*—The paradox, if attentively examined, will soon appear an undeniable fact. Without having recourse to the microscope, we shall certainly find on this square yard some kind of vegetable, if only a little moss; and some animal, if only an ant, a fly, or a flea. In the organisation of this animal and this vegetable, we should probably find more wonderful combinations than any of our mechanicians can form. But as neither you nor I have the patience and dexterity necessary for so delicate an operation, let us leave it to the Anatomists, and judge of the marvels of the work by the astonishing result.

The most minute plant and the tiniest insect are endowed with life and motion. The former developes itself, grows and spreads with the greatest regularity; the latter regulates all its actions with the utmost wisdom. Both repair their internal losses, feed themselves, and possess the faculty of propagating their species; which wonderful qualities human genius has never been able to impart to its creations.

Assemble together all the artists and workmen who have filled the Crystal Palace with their *chefs d'œuvres*, and invite them to choose out of so many beautiful productions one at which to work till their ingenious industry has endowed it with as much life and motion as are to be found in a blade of grass, they would laugh at so extravagant an idea. What would become of all the wonderful productions of human industry displayed in the Palace of Hyde Park, if they were left



to their own powers of self-preservation, being, as they are, only the dead works of mortal genius? The cotton linen, woollen, and silken fabrics, etc., would soon fall to dust; worms and rust would speedily destroy the wood and the metal; and in less than two years not one of those powerful machines would be in a state to work. Nevertheless, to judge by the past, it is certain that after the lapse of a hundred, or a thousand years, the moss and insects of Hyde Park would still be in existence, and unfailing in the propagation of their kind, even were the spot which held them laid waste with fire and sword every ten years.

Such being the case, can you dispute the following deductions? The life and motion possessed by the diminutive plant and insect, which we have selected for observation out of a hundred others in one square yard of ground, hold as works of intelligence a far higher rank than the choicest productions of human industry. The power of re-production and self-preservation possessed by the species to which this plant and insect belong, a power which enables them to perpetuate themselves through the course of ages, in defiance of so many causes of destruction, this power, I say, proves the existence of a mind possessing infinitely more science and foresight than ours. It is, therefore, true that the beings contained in one square yard of earth prove as clearly the existence of a workman superior to man, as the wonders of the Crystal Palace prove the existence of a number of human workmen eminently skilful. And as it is notorious that all parts of the world, even the vast oceans, and the frozen shores of the north teem with animal and vegetable life, we need but calculate how many square yards there are on the whole surface of the globe, to know how many million times more blind and senseless are those who deny or doubt the existence of God, than that man who at the sight of the Great Exhibition should have said: "I do not see there any proofs of human industry."

*Ques.*—I do not know of any answer that could be made to your argument, which is, after all, nothing but the voice of man's conscience. In all climes, and in all ages, this voice has held the same language.

I think arguments similar to yours are to be found in the writings of Cicero, excepting, of course, what referred to the Crystal Palace.\*

\* "Is it then to be a man," asks Cicero, "to ascribe, not to an intelligent cause, but to chance, the movements of the Heavens, which are so certain and so constant—the course of the stars, which is so regular, and

But familiarity destroys admiration, and this universal exhibition of the wonders of Divine industry has lasted too many ages for it to have much effect.

*Ans.*—Yes, and this indifference produced by familiarity inspired the Pagan philosopher, to whom you just alluded, with another beautiful page of eloquence.\*

What we want are not proofs of the existence of God (thousands are under our eyes every day), but attention. Therefore to overcome the indolence of our minds, it will be as well not to be contented with mere general observations, but to contemplate some of the works of God in particular.

In our planet, which is a very minute portion of the Divine Palace of the Universe, there are three kinds of beings: animal, vegetable, and mineral. Let us pass by the latter, although its study every day affords to geologists, mineralogists, and chemists, new proofs of ineffable wisdom; and let us receive a short lesson in theology from the vegetable and animal world.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Theology of Vegetables.*

*Ques.*—The number of vegetables is so great, that, if they all have to speak, the lesson will be somewhat long and confused.

*Ans.*—Fear nothing; I will single out the orator and speak for him.

The vegetable kingdom is divided by botanists of the present

all things in the universe, which are in such perfect harmony with each other, so well proportioned, and conducted with so much wisdom that our reason is lost, when we endeavour to comprehend them? What! when we behold machines which possess artificial movement, such as a sphere, a clock, or similar instruments—we do not doubt their being the work of reason and intelligence—and shall we doubt that the world is governed, I do not say merely by a mind, but by an admirable mind, by a divine mind? etc.”—*De Naturâ Deorum*, lib. ii. 37.

\* “Imagine a nation having always dwelt under ground in large and beautiful houses. . . . ; let us imagine that without having ever ascended to the surface of the earth, this nation heard speak of the divinity. . . . that then, the earth opening suddenly, the subterranean prisoners were to quit their dark abodes and ascend to where we are living; what would they think on beholding all at once the earth, the sea, and the heavens? and when night came on the earth, what would they say on beholding the sky strewn and spangled with stars? . . . . When these men saw such wonders, they certainly would be convinced that there are gods, and that all these things were created by them.”—*Ibid.*

day into *cotyledonous vascular* vegetables, and *acotyledonous cellular* vegetables. From the first category, which contains the greatest part of the vegetable species, I will select one specimen of the humblest species, any one of the plants with which our fields or gardens are filled—a pink, a rose, a mallow, or a thistle, it matters not.

This plant is composed of a stalk attached to the ground by roots, and bearing flowers and fruit. Without entering into the numerous details of scientific research, we see that the roots admirably perform their office, which is to support the stalk, and impart nourishment to it. In those plants that are intended for the food of animals, and are to shoot out rapidly, such as lucerne, the roots are remarkable for their length and ravenousness, and in tall, thickly foliated trees they extend further than the branches, so as to have plenty of water and sun, etc.

The stalk of the plant is a cellular tube, the structure of which would fill us with astonishment, were we to look at it with the assistance of a microscope. Among the numerous cells of which it is composed, there are some of a particular shape, which being placed with their ends meeting, and with a communication from one to the other, form two distinct chains, one of which is intended to convey to the leaves the sap pumped up by the roots through their suckers, and the other to cause the air, which the leaves imbibe with their mouths or *stomata*, to circulate in the stalk. The cells of the first chain are called *sap vessels*, and form, as it were, the circulatory system of the plant; while the cells of the latter are the breathing apparatus, and called *air-vessels* or *windpipes*.

Let us now examine a leaf. See in the first place the stalk which connects the leaf with the main stem. Small as it is, it contains the two apparatus for the circulation of sap and air without their interfering with each other, and from it proceeds an infinite number of little veins, most of which are visible to the naked eye, and radiate through the leaf. And there what happens to the sap? The air with which it has previously been supplied by the little windpipes has by no means satisfied its appetite, and it now breathes more freely, parts with all superfluities, retains what is suitable, absorbs oxygen, exhales carbonic acid, which it decomposes to reject the oxygen and absorb the carbon, etc.; it does not, in short, return to the stalk until in possession of the properties necessary for the nourishment of the plant, and for the production of flowers and fruit. The whole shape and position of the leaf is arranged to ensure the

success of these vital operations, and so sensible is the plant of this, that if you attempt to turn downwards the side of the leaf which is properly turned to the sky, it will cause it to resume its original position, and will die rather than submit to the inversion of its leaves. If you examine the latter, you will perceive that the difference in the organisation of the back and front of the leaf is the cause of such obstinacy in the plant. You will see that if there are some things required by the leaf from the heavens above, there are even more required from the radiation of the earth, and from the body of air that lies between itself and the ground, and that the extreme delicacy of the organs of respiration and suction never could support the direct action of the sun and rain.

From the laboratory of the leaf let us proceed to the flower, the splendour of which seems to invite us to expect still greater things. There, in fact, the miracle is worked that renders the humblest plant immortal, and transforms a fragile weed which scarcely covers an inch of ground into a being endowed with power to fill the whole world with its species.

Flowers are either male, female, or hermaphrodite. Of the latter kind, which is the most common, let us single out one of the simplest form, for example, the pink. In the first place, we see an exterior wrapper, composed of one or several rows of little leaves arranged in the form of a cup, or calix. In the calix, more leaves, called *petals*, and richly coloured, are arranged in a circular form, alternating with the leaves of the calix, and forming a second beautiful enclosure, called the *corolla*.

In the corolla, which serves as a reflector to second the action of the sun, and which is the parent of the flowers and fruit, we find the two organs of reproduction—1st. The *stamen*, consisting of one or several slender filaments; this stamen, when exposed to the action of the sun's rays, becomes filled with a fruitful dust called *pollen*, which, at the proper time, issues forth through openings at the side or extremity of the stamen. 2nd. The *pistil*, of which there is one or many, and in which three things may be observed; the *stigmata*, or orifice by which the pollen is introduced, the *style*, or tube which conveys the pollen to the ovary. And lastly, a something that is at once infinitely small and infinitely great, contained in the ovary. Nothing in fact can well be smaller in appearance than what we call *seeds*; and yet nothing in reality be greater, since, as I have already remarked, there is no seed which might not in course of time fill the entire globe with its descendants.

We have given but a cursory glance, and yet how many wonderful things have we not discovered in this plant, which selects with so much wisdom from earth and air all the elements necessary for its existence, elaborating and transforming them with incomparable skill ; and then, by the resources it possesses in itself, defending its fragile life against all the causes of destruction which undermine the most powerful empires ! What deep and extensive combinations does the result presuppose, not only in the organisation of the plant, but likewise in the constitution of our earth and of the solar system, with which this plant is in perpetual connection !

Let us now ask the Atheist and Materialist, what it is that has arranged the thousands of things necessary to the life of this plant. A chemist, on analysing the plant, can only discover in it a small number of substances, some of which are volatile and gaseous, diffused in the atmosphere, and others fixed in the soil, and belonging to it. When the former are dispersed by combustion there remain only a few ashes, composed of thousands and millions of molecules of extreme delicacy, capable of indefinite sub-division. Let us then beg all Atheists and Materialists to point out which motionless and lifeless molecule, or which gaseous atom has planned our pink ; the soil on which it grows, the atmosphere by which it is surrounded, the rivers and seas which furnish it with moisture, or the sun by the warmth of which it is vivified. Let them show us the adorable molecule, or all-powerful atom, which, after having conceived such ideas in its wisdom, could enforce obedience when it said to the sun : " Keep thyself at the proper distance to vivify this plant "—to the earth ; " Regulate thy revolutions round the sun with such precision that thy produce may never be either burnt or frozen "—to the sea and rivers ; " Let a portion of your waters be absorbed in the clouds "—and lastly, to the thousands of vegetable molecules which are spread in every direction, on earth and in the air : " Join and form a rose, a pink which shall never die, except to live again ! "

Do you imagine that by dint of analysing vegetable matter, and mixing gas and ashes together, the Atheist and Materialist will ever succeed in discovering in them a sufficient cause for the wonders of the vegetable kingdom ?

*Ques.*—If they made so splendid a discovery, we should be obliged to say to them : " Fall prostrate before these ashes and fluids, for to them belongs that fulness of wisdom and power which men adore under the name of God. "

*Ans.*—And you would do right. By denying the existence of

the Author of the universal system, the Atheist makes a god of everything; and to be consistent, he should imitate the fetiches of Africa and India, who adore all that they behold, even the vermin which devour them. Let us now see whether the tiny plant, by means of which we have silenced the Atheists, has not also power to confound their brethren, the Pantheists. You are, doubtless, aware that the Pantheists assert the eternal existence of the world, and deny, like the Atheists, the existence of one, great, all-powerful God, who, after having conceived the scheme of the universe in his infinite wisdom, executed it by the free impulse of his will, and with the full knowledge of what he was doing.

The purely nominal difference between pantheist and atheist teaching, consists in this: the atheist, rejecting every idea of *God* and of *creation*, sees in the universe nothing but the work of chance—the eternal effect of blind necessity; whilst the pantheist sees in the universe the work and the substance of a single Being, partly spirit, and partly matter, which labours to develop itself, and to take various shapes, in order to arrive at self knowledge. This *Universe God*, which he likewise denominates the *Great All*, would be therefore at the same time an animal, a vegetable, a mineral and a sidereal substance. Alternately petrified in the solid layers of the earth, vegetating in plants, and living in animals, this God would begin to think, reflect, and reason in man, which latter would be his noblest form. Confident in the progress of the mind of man, the pantheists do not doubt that, by dint of reasoning within us, the *Universe God* will end by understanding his own mind, and arriving one day at the exact knowledge of what he is, what he is doing, and whither his desires tend.

I now ask whether such a God could plan or produce our pink, or a plant of lucerne or clover?

*Ques.*—Common sense tells us that a God who understands no more than man, could not possibly invent and create what so evidently surpasses human ability.

*Ans.*—Now that the brief examination of a little plant has proved to us the existence of God as clearly as a legion of theologians could do, let us try to form some idea of the numbers of these our instructors.

We are informed by botanical catalogues that there are seventy-five thousand different kinds of known plants. If we add to this number one fourth for unknown vegetables, we have one hundred thousand. If some kinds are extremely rare, there are others so common that their numbers defy calculation; a small

field containing perhaps millions of them. Consequently there would be no exaggeration in saying that each vegetable family (from the smallest moss which clings to a stone, to the gigantic trees of American and Asiatic forests,) is composed, upon an average, of a thousand million individuals. Behold, then, a hundred thousand million witnesses which never cease protesting against the blindness or untruthfulness of atheists, materialists, pantheists, and sceptics.

Let us now enter a still more numerous and eloquent school of theology—the animal kingdom.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *Theology of Animals.*

*Ques.*—Do you really believe that the number of animals is greater than that of plants?

*Ans.*—I am even very much inclined to believe that every plant is a world in itself, inhabited by numerous families of animals, and I do not think that this opinion will at all surprise any one, who, without having made zoology his especial study, has given his attention to the discoveries which have been made in that science.

If you have read the writings of the Author of the *Etudes de la Nature*, you may perhaps remember the description he gives of the incredible variety of little flies which he observed on a strawberry plant *growing by chance on his window sill*, in the midst of the smoke of Paris.\* Bernardin de St. Pierre thought, with reason, that besides this wandering population, his strawberry plant must support many families indigenous to it, and he quoted on this point the observations made by Lecuwenhock, Robert Hook, etc., which prove the existence of thousands of animalcules in a drop of liquid the size of a millet seed.

Now, when the career, opened by such men as Lecuwenhock, Linnæus, Reaumur, Lyonnet, Spallanzani, etc., is pursued by innumerable naturalists who are furnished with powerful instruments, it is proved that all vegetables and liquids are teeming with living animals, the remains of which compose in great measure the sands of the sea shore, and the soil of our lands. Many curious observations have been recently made, and proved to be correct, but I shall at present only bring forward those of

\* See *Etude première.*

M. Ehrenberg, a German, and those of M. d'Orbigny, a French professor. The former has proved that the silicious stone, known by the name of *Tripoli* (the dust of which is much used for the polishing of stones and metals,) is entirely composed of the tiny carcasses of animalcules of three distinct species, and he calculates that one square centi-metre of this stone, weighing very little more than half a grain, contains upwards of two hundred million individuals of the species called *gaillonella distans*. M. d'Orbigny has proved that the shells of the animalcules of the kind called *foraminiferous* (of which fifteen hundred different species are already known) exist in such numbers in the calcareous ground near Paris, that one square inch, taken by chance from the road of Gentilly, contains from fifty to sixty thousand of them.

It is therefore certain that the scale of animal life descends beneath man to a depth unfathomable; that the number of species in each genus, and of individuals in each species, is found to increase the further we push our investigations; that a great part of the solid matter of which our globe is formed, and which has been hitherto thought to be inorganic, is in reality the production of beings gifted with life superior to that of vegetables, and finally, that in the present state of science, any attempt to make the most distant calculation of the numbers of the animal species would be mere folly. Let us leave to the learned the examination of the miracles of wisdom and power displayed in the organization, life, and labours of a world absolutely unknown to us before the invention of the microscope. Let us, as in the vegetable kingdom, select out of the number of animals visible to the naked eye, some well-known species, for example, the caterpillar.

*Ques.*—Could you not have chosen some more agreeable looking insect?

*Ans.*—Let us then choose the beautiful butterfly, which, by a charming caprice of nature, is at once the parent and the offspring of the caterpillar.

You are no doubt aware that at a particular period of the year, caterpillars suddenly cease their ravages on our trees to weave out of their own substance a golden palace (*the chrysalis*), which serves as a grave for the caterpillar, and a cradle for the butterfly.

The chrysalis varies in form and colour, as well as in the manner in which it hangs from, or adheres to a branch, or leaf; but whether it remains uncovered as generally happens, or whether it surrounds itself, as in the case of the silk worm, with a beautiful web, it always affords shelter from the inclemency of



the weather, and is amply provided with all things necessary for the development of the newborn insect it contains. What takes place in this mysterious retreat, during the time when scarce a movement can be perceived from without, we know not. But after an interval, which may last from twenty to three hundred days, we behold the thinnest side of the tiny mansion break, and afford passage to an insect, the appearance, instincts, and actions of which differ most wonderfully from those of the caterpillar.

The caterpillar creeps humbly along the ground and on the branches of trees, and can suspend itself in the air only by the help of a thread, woven at the cost of much labour; it lives on the parenchyma of leaves, which it masticates, and digests in one or several stomachs extending the whole length of its body. The butterfly, on the contrary, by its elegance of form and brilliancy of colour, is one of the most beautiful inhabitants of the air, and lives only upon the juice of delicate flowers, which it sucks up by means of a trunk or sucker. Nothing can better express the contrast between these two insects, which appear nevertheless to be but one, than these proverbial expressions: "Ugly as a caterpillar," or "Lovely as a butterfly."

Let us leave the full examination of the body of the insect to the learned, and confine our observations to its wings, in such a manner as to suit the capacities of all.

There is no one, from the child to the old man, who does not admire the richness, splendour, and variety of colour in many of the butterfly tribe. Neither is there any one who does not know that to rub the wing of a butterfly between the fingers is enough to destroy its colours and transform it into a transparent web. If you examine through a microscope the coloured dust, that has adhered to your fingers, you will find that these grains of dust are so many scales or feathers of various shapes, intended to produce the most brilliant effects, by reflecting the light from their smooth and polished surfaces. If you examine the transparent web, you will find that it is composed of two tissues, one forming, as it were, the frame work, or canvass of the wing, and the other, which is at once of great strength and marvellous delicacy, containing innumerable little holes, into which the scales or feathers fit.

And now, O philosophers, name the artist who so lavishly designed and executed these wonderful pieces of tapestry, in comparison with which the *chef d'œuvre* of Gobelin Tapestry (the massacre of the Mamelukes) is no better than a coarse sketch! Who guided the weaving of these thousands of threads

with such marvellous dexterity? What optician cut, arranged, and fixed these thousands of scales or feathers? Let us even suppose that there is nothing there but what can be seen with the naked eye—canvass and dust; still, who is the painter, who, after having prepared the canvass, selected and arranged these atoms of dust with such talent, as to produce a painting so inimitable. Is it not true that the wing of a butterfly reveals the existence of God to the mind of any man who chooses to reflect, as clearly as the Heavens themselves?

*Ques.*—Yes, certainly; and I think that many more persons would devote themselves to the study of theology, if the book used were to be only a butterfly's wing, instead of long Latin dissertations, which make but little impression even upon those who have the patience to read or hear them.

*Ans.*—Granted; but for theology to become at once solid and agreeable, it is perhaps as well for our intellect to be supplied in the first instance with the coarser and drier food of Latin treatises, just as the caterpillar feeds on coarser aliments before it can wing its flight upwards. I must say one word more on the subject of the butterfly. Its career is as brief as brilliant; it never outlives the season which saw its birth. Although the very emblem of fickleness and thoughtlessness, it nevertheless has care and thought for its posterity, and may even be considered a model of parental foresight and tenderness.

When the time for laying its eggs approaches, you may be certain that, if one of the species that lay their eggs in the ground, it will deposit them in the neighbourhood of that vegetable which is to supply its little ones with their first food. But if its nature is to lay its eggs on trees, it will be sure to select a tree that will afford nourishment to its family, and will deposit the eggs in a circle round a branch, taking care to place that end of the egg upwards from which the caterpillar is to issue forth, in the same manner as its mother, the caterpillar, had arranged matters in the chrysalis. It will then cover these eggs with a kind of glue or varnish, in order that the wind may not blow them away, nor the rain and cold penetrate to their interior. If they are to remain there through the winter, the coat of varnish will be so thick, that even were the tree killed by the cold, the eggs would survive. This operation completed, it departs this life without pain, and some species even make their remains serve as shelter for their little ones.

If the hatching takes place in autumn, we may see thousands of little caterpillars making the most of the few fine days, to devour the leaves, and transform them into excessively delicate

silk or cotton, so as to prepare for themselves a shelter, which will protect them from the inclemencies of the season far better than our air-tight rooms could do. The skill displayed by these little insects in their first labours shows us what we may expect from them during the whole course of their existence, and if we examine their labours, from their first awaking to life in the spring to the formation of the chrysalis, we shall find that the industry of the caterpillar, which far surpasses our own, equals the beauty of the butterfly. Even the very organisation of these apparently humble insects would furnish materials for lengthened studies.

The learned Lyonnet, in his anatomical researches on one single species, has proved the existence of *four thousand perfectly distinct muscles* in each individual.\*

By calculating roughly the proofs of skill and foresight displayed in the formation of each of these muscles, in their arrangement within the tiny body of the caterpillar, and in their disposition with regard to innumerable other little organs, some of which are indispensably necessary to impart life, and others to preserve it—such, for instance, as the beautiful velvet covering with which some species are clothed; this covering being evidently intended, not only to serve as clothing for the animalcule, but likewise to break its fall in case of its being thrown by the wind from the top of a tree before it could have time to unwind its thread, etc.; by calculating, I repeat, these proofs of skill and foresight, we should have hundreds of thousands, nay millions, of proofs of the profound wisdom of the Inventor of the caterpillar.

Looking only at this, without having recourse to the thousands and thousands of millions of insects which come into existence in one single year, and display before our eyes the three wonderful existences of the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and the butterfly, we may surely overwhelm with the anathemas of common sense all those atheists, pantheists, and sceptic pedants who are incessantly repeating the words of their father Rousseau: *It is by no means a small undertaking to prove that there is a God (Emile)*.

*Ques.*—Yes, and I begin to perceive that there is wisdom sufficiently displayed in the organisation of one single caterpillar to silence all these vain speechifiers.

*Ans.*—Nevertheless, we have only questioned (and that very

\* See his *Traité anatomique de la chenille qui ronge de bois de saule* (1762)—1 vol. Lyonnet is also the translator of Lissers' *Theology of Insects*.

superficially) one single species forming a link of the immense chain of the animal kingdom, a chain commencing with those invisibly small animalcules of which ten times a hundred thousand would not cover the palm of our hand, and ending with the elephant, on the broad back of which man builds small houses. What would be the result, if I could here present you with an abridgement of all the zoological studies and observations of the most celebrated naturalists, from Aristotle and Pliny down to Buffon and Cuvier?

But I have said enough on the theology of animals.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *The Theology of the Stars—The Origin of Atheism.*

*Ques.*—The stars! Theologians, better known and heard, if not more eloquent than weeds and insects! Even women of the most uneducated classes have long turned Atheism into ridicule, by asking its disciples whether they have never seen the heavens on a clear night.

*Ans.*—In fact, the argument is as old as the world, and on a level with the understandings of all. It was considered unanswerable even in the days when the learned and ignorant alike saw nothing in the sky but what can be beheld with the naked eye,—a beautiful vault, lighted up by two thousand luminaries—and when there were so few atheists that half the world did not believe any could exist, and the rest regarded them as monsters.

When the Saturnalia of the sixteenth century scattered those seeds of Atheism that were to come to maturity in the eighteenth, it was fitting that Europe should be provided with fresh weapons in order to combat successfully the armies of Atheists which hell was about to bring forward in battle array. We can never sufficiently rejoice at the *fortunate chance* which caused microscopes and telescopes to be invented about that time. These instruments discovered to man, both on earth and in the heavens, new worlds, far surpassing in number and beauty those which Columbus, Vasco de Gama, and Vespuccius were discovering beyond the seas. Without leaving their studios or greenhouses, men were suddenly enabled to explore totally unknown regions, and make, in the space of a few days, more curious observations than

any traveller in a voyage round the world. The miracles of organisation that are to be beheld in the most minute of the vegetable and animal species, where nothing is left to chance, have utterly destroyed the ancient erroneous theory of *blind and fortuitous generation*, brought about by the fermentation of the earth under the action of the sun's rays, which error was actually believed by the ancients, and celebrated by Virgil in his immortal verse. If so antiquated an error still finds some partizans in our academies, it is because even the microscope cannot dispel the fears entertained by some men of a God, who bestows attention even upon the minutest details.

Not less wonderful was the change brought about by the telescope in man's ideas concerning astronomy. He beheld no longer a mere crystal vault, but endless space in which, instead of two thousand bright lights, millions of worlds revolved. The great luminary, supposed by poets to set every night in the ocean, was discovered to be at a distance of ninety-five millions of miles from the earth; and its size, ascertained with geometrical exactitude, was proved to be fourteen hundred thousand times greater than that of the earth. Neither have the planets, whether large or small, and upwards of twenty in number, been able to conceal from us the exact length of time they take to revolve round the sun, of which they form the train, and each revolution is accomplished in the space of a few months by Mercury and Venus, but not in less than a century and a half by Neptune.\*

Concerning even comets themselves, which puzzle astronomers by their sudden appearance in the heavens and by the capriciousness of their movements, as much as they sometimes terrify us by the enormous length of their tails, † discoveries have now been made clearly proving the error of those who fancied them to be nothing but signs in the heavens, or awful freaks of blind nature. The paths of six comets have already been so accurately defined, that the time of their return can be foretold with tolerable certainty.

Finally, what was *the prodigious speed* that Cicero admired in the stars‡ compared to that of our earth, traversing twenty-one miles of space per second, which speed is nevertheless surpassed one hundred and sixty thousand times by one of the so-called fixed stars?

\* The name of the planet discovered by M. Leverrier in 1846. It takes 165 years to perform its revolution round the sun, and its distance from the sun is thirty times that of the earth.

† The tail of the comet of 1843 was 61 millions of miles in length.

‡ See *de Natura Deorum*, lib. ii. 37.

*Ques.*—That is perfectly incredible ; it would be a velocity of more than three million miles a second !

*Ans.*—I will not attempt to convince you of the truth of this statement, only referring you to my authority, M. Bessel, a great astronomer of Berlin, and giving you the numerical position of one of these swift stars—61 of the constellation Cygnus.

Yet, what is our solar system in the vast extent of the heavens, as revealed to us by the telescope ? No more than one microscopic animalcule in the midst of a herd of elephants, and it would, in fact, be scarcely perceptible, could we view it from the position occupied by the nearest of the stars ! Nevertheless we might well dispense with the sight of it, occupied as we should be with the study of those countless myriads of stars, which defy the power of our telescopes, and appear for the most part only like a little luminous dust. The almost miraculous patience with which astronomers have measured our distance from two or three stars, has revealed to us the fact, that they are five or six hundred thousand times farther removed from us than the earth is from the sun.

If the telescope has not enabled man to ascertain the diameter of these globes, which no doubt is in proportion to their amazing distance from us, it has at least taught him the existence of millions and millions of stars never dreamed of by the ancients. As the microscope enabled men like Lyonnet and Lecuwenhock to count as many as thirty or forty thousand animalcules in one single drop of water, so Herschel's telescope discovered to him fifty thousand stars in a very small space. The famous *Nebulous* spots which were thought even by the celebrated English astronomer to be collections of *disorganised matter* in the process of formation into new stars, have been discovered to be countless myriads of stars, since the enormous telescope of Lord Rosse has brought them nearer to the eye.

In short, as science stands at present, any attempt to define the number of the stars would be still more senseless than to endeavour to take an exact census of the living beings with which our earth is peopled. Infinitude is no longer a mere abstract philosophical idea ; it is a fact displayed before our eyes with equal power in the vast extent of the heavens, and in the equally unmeasurable minute worlds which we trample under-foot.

To sum up all I have said in a few words, Atheism, in all its forms, was judged to be worse than folly, even when there was nothing to be accounted for but the government of a world inhabited by a few thousand different kinds of animals, and

lighted by two or three thousand revolving luminaries. What then must we think of those blind mortals who deny the existence of a universal Ruler in these days, when the universe is displayed before us as an unending society of different beings, all endowed with motion, from the invisible animalcule, which would be a hundred years travelling round a drop of water, even to those immense globes which traverse thousands and thousands of miles in a single second?

I return to the point from which I started—the Great Exhibition of London, and will conclude by the following reflection. If the labours of human industry afford such proofs of the intelligence and thought which must have directed them, that it is impossible for any one not deprived of reason to deny the existence of intelligent beings; how, I ask you, can any one deny, or even doubt for one instant, the existence of the Almighty Mind, which out of such countless millions of masterpieces, differing so marvellously from each other, has formed one single whole, thus uniting perfect unity with infinite variety!

*Ques.*—One mystery alone remains unexplained: How can Atheism exist at all? and how is it that it has increased in consequence of the progress of science? Do you believe that there are any sincere Atheists in the world?

*Ans.*—Leaving God to judge hearts, I will merely state a fact known to all. Atheism during the last century possessed many schools, and if in the present day it has but few avowed champions, no one can deny that it has everywhere made great progress under the less frightful shape of Pantheism and Scepticism, insomuch that at present men may fairly be divided into two classes, viz.: Atheists of various kinds, and Christians more or less avowed.

To explain this fact is an easy task. Ignorance, thoughtlessness, and pride are the three well-known and amply sufficient causes of the progress made by Atheism. The two first account for its success in the lower orders; for religious instruction alone can elevate the minds of the people to things above the reach of their senses. Let this light once fail them, and they fall helplessly into the grossest errors; and if Atheism is preached to them, and it has been of late, the number of Atheists increases rapidly.

Pride, assisted by the animal passions, gives birth to the preachers of Atheism. And pride, to be fruitful, need not even rise to its greatest height: under the form of vanity it was abundantly prolific eighty years ago. Diderot denied the existence of God in his writings, much for the same reason that induced

him to walk about the streets of the cities of Northern Europe in nightcap and dressing-gown, accompanied by a footman, who had received instructions to tell those whose curiosity was excited, "That is the philosopher Diderot!" One and the same motive prompted the astronomer Lalande to make open profession of Atheism, and to pretend to eat spiders before ladies, who would exclaim: "What an incomprehensible being is that M. Lalande!" In these days, when Atheism is no longer a novelty, men of this stamp must endeavour to distinguish themselves by their mode of warfare. Scientific arguments being less available than ever, they must make war upon God by bravados. They must openly say to Him: "*Begone, author of all evil! who dost haunt and torture my conscience!* I hate and abhor thee, as much as I love liberty; thou hast tyrannised long enough over the world—mine be the mission of emancipating mankind from thy yoke!" Such language is, like the grotesque attire of Diderot and the spiders of Lalande, only a means of attracting attention, and causing the weak-minded to exclaim: "This M. Proudhon is by no means a man of common mind!"

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## CHAPTER V.

*That the God of the Universe is really the God of the Gospel.*

*Ques.*—What do you mean by that?

*Ans.*—I mean, that the God whose works we have been admiring, can neither be the great god formerly adored by the Greeks and Romans under the name of Jupiter, nor the deity at present adored by the Indians under the name of Brahma. The son of Saturn and Rhea, who was suckled by a goat, in a cave of the island of Crete, may have furnished the poets of antiquity with materials for magnificent poetry and endless fables; but philosophical good sense can never suppose such a god to be the author of a vegetable, or an insect. Neither can it possibly regard as such the Hindoo god, who is ever plunged in sleep, from which he arouses himself every four or five hundred thousand years only to destroy the fantastic productions that have emanated from his dreams. The most that can be attributed to this sleeping divinity is the social and religious system, which now governs the most torpid of the human race.

I mean, in the second place, that the God of the Universe cannot be the Fatalist god of the Koran, who is a slave to blind



necessity, the author of evil as well as of good, and of the most fantastic productions the mind can conceive. This god is worthy of a brutal and sensual race, and would be a monster, were it only for choosing as the interpreter of his will that sanguinary and lascivious despot, who said to his followers: "Kill, or crush with outrages all who refuse to receive the Koran, impale all who presume openly to dispute its truth, and treat women as animals created to satisfy your passions on earth."

I mean, in the third place, that the God of the Universe cannot be the mechanician god of the Deists, who, after having organised the world like a clock, makes it go by virtue of mechanical powers which a first impulse has set in motion. When not prodigies of organisation only, but also countless motions, evidently directed by consummate wisdom, have to be accounted for in lifeless and senseless matter, it is as ridiculous and intolerable to speak of a mechanical force devoid of intelligence, as to talk with the Atheist about chance and blind nature. On either side the words have no meaning. Plain common sense, which only takes a cursory glance, as well as genius, which enters into the profound details of analysis, and investigates the causes of every thing, must agree in acknowledging, that a world so resplendent with intelligence and life is evidently the work of the *living God*, in whom all matter *lives and moves, and is,\** who *orders all things, in measure and number and weight,†* who measures with the same compass the movement of the animacules and the orbits of the stars; who calculates the number of the muscles of the caterpillar, and the number of planets or stars necessary for each celestial zone; who weighs in the same balance the quantity of azote and oxygen which enter into the composition of an atom of air, and those enormous masses which preserve their equilibrium in infinite space; who watches with the most indefatigable love over the humblest being as well as over the entire universe; who adorns the wing of the butterfly, and clothes the grass of the field so that *not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these;‡* who feeds the birds of the air, and counts the very hairs of our head, so that not one of them can fall without his will !||

And now let me ask: Is this God any other than the God of the Gospel?

*Ques.*—I am most willing to own that the intelligence and life so profusely bestowed upon the smallest things prove the exist-

\* Acts, xvii. 25, 28.

† Wisdom, xi. 21.

‡ Matthew, vi. 29.

|| Ibid, x. 29—31.

ence of a Providence which leaves nothing to chance: but it appears to me by no means equally certain that the God of the Gospel, who is a God of love, clearly exhibits himself in the government of nature. If the disorders and crimes of mankind can be explained by their abuse of liberty, the never ending war that animals wage among themselves, and the hostility they display towards us, do not admit of the same explanation. A theatre of rapine and carnage, the earth presents too mournful a spectacle to the eyes of its inhabitants, for them not to inquire whether it can possibly be the work of divine love.

*Ans.*—The answer to this question, which was so perplexing to the philosophers of antiquity, is given by the Catholic Catechism as taught to children: The earth is no longer as God originally created it. Its first Lord and Master sinned, and it was right that it should suffer the penalty, as all families suffer when their chief goes astray. The earth, even before the sin of Adam, was not to be the permanent abode of man; it was only a place of passage and trial. It is still the same, and by an admirable arrangement of Divine love, the evils of this life *work together unto good, to such as according to his purpose are called to be saints.\**

Let us for a moment receive as a hypothesis this Christian dogma, that *we are placed for a short time in this world to prepare for a better*, and we shall see that the disorder and sufferings, of which you were speaking, are in reality powerful means of assisting us in this our preparation. The first thing we require is food. Now it is by no means a small undertaking to supply the human race and the numerous family of domestic animals with food. The spade, the plough, and all our agricultural tools, would not by any means be sufficient. We might waste our toil in vain upon the earth, if other labour, far more persevering and experienced than ours, did not penetrate into the bowels of the earth and create there sources of fruitfulness, which the schemes suggested by our ignorance often only dry up.

Who are the most indefatigable labourers in this great workshop of the world?

Countless millions of the animal species, daily occupied in tillage of every kind, by which we profit even when despising and abusing the labourers. We can praise and admire the worm that spins our silk, the winged insect that provides us with wax and honey, or the nightingale that charms our ears with its song; but we do not bestow the smallest attention

\* Romans, viii. 28.

upon those countless generations ; the greatest part of which are invisible to the naked eye, but which cultivate and manure those hills and vales on which grow our bread, our wine, and so many kinds of delicious fruit.

When did these labours first begin ? It is probable that they commenced long before the creation of man. The study of geology has revealed the fact, that the present organisation of the earth rests upon the remains of anterior organisations in which the animal tribe took a prominent part. On the other hand, organic zoology and chemistry are on the very eve of proving, without perhaps being aware of it, a thesis of the highest possible interest to the philosopher, politician, and agriculturist. This thesis is, that *the office of the immense family of insects and animalcules is to decompose all organic matter, and that all vertebrated animals contain in their organisation, particularly in the bones, the properties that are essential for the production of vegetables, more especially of the corn species.* This fact once proved, the agriculturist will know that the most persevering and indefatigable labour can never render the soil fruitful unless the remains of those animals which it has furnished with food be restored to it. The politician will be provided with new weapons against centralisation which by causing men and animals to crowd together in towns, causes at the same time a corruption of morals, and an impoverishment of the soil. The philosopher will see why our globe is one great charnel house, and regard these worlds of former ages which we trample under foot as the primeval tillage and dressing necessary for that soil which was to provide the human race with food.

However, I hope you will not wait for these proofs to believe in the utility of all animals, and understand why they are at war with one another.

*Ques.*—Your considerations prove that God has created nothing useless, a fact which I do not dispute ; but does it follow, that it would not have been better if peace had been established among the various animal tribes, and if we had not been obliged to be continually on the *qui vive* to defend our lives, our domestic animals, and our food against ravenous beasts and insects ?

*Ans.*—Does it not follow as a consequence of the two propositions already advanced, one of which is certain and the other probable ? It is certain *that the number of animals is much greater than that of vegetables*, and it is highly probable *that vegetables are pro-created animals* ; from these two propositions

does it not follow, that the vegetable kingdom is by no means large enough for the support of the animal kingdom, so that necessarily the latter must have intestine warfare? Your project of universal peace would be attended by the slight inconvenience of annihilating the animal and vegetable world, and consequently the human race, in the course of a few years. In fact, this peace would at once put an end to the existence of all the carnivorous tribe peopling the air, the earth, and the waters. Delivered from their enemies, the herbivorous tribes would multiply to an infinite extent, soon devour all the vegetable species, and then perish themselves, together with the whole human race upon the desolate earth. In illustration of this, I need only call to your mind the little experiment made by England and Prussia. These countries set a price upon the head of every sparrow, as a destroyer of fruit and corn. But no sooner was the work of destruction accomplished than the trees and crops were found to be so overrun with caterpillars and insects, that the farmers were obliged again to introduce the sparrows as the great destroyers of this vermin.

Let us therefore acknowledge that, were it not for the war which animals, by the ordinance of superior wisdom, make upon one another, neither ourselves nor the contending parties could thrive or even exist. Our daily warfare with the so-called noxious animals is not less useful to us as a means of education.

According to the beautiful remark of St. Augustin, *man is rendered as unsocial by his vices as he is social by nature.\** Among these vices there are above all two, which, impatient of control or restraint, tend to isolate man, and leave him a prey to the brutal suggestions of blind egotism. Pride and indolence are the two leading characteristics of the wild tribes of America and Oceanica, and are the cause (humanely speaking) of insurmountable obstacles to their civilization. Pride and indolence are likewise the parents of still more formidable tribes of savages, who endanger the civilisation of Europe.

If a certain degree of useful knowledge, some remains of industry, and the outline of social organisation are to be found among the former, it is owing to the necessity which draws and keeps families together for their mutual preservation from the attacks of wild beasts. Deprive the savage, who so passionately longs for rest and independence of this salutary restraint, and you will soon find him separated from his chiefs, seeking in the depths of the forests a private asylum for his family, and

\* *In the city of God.*—Book xii. ch. 29.

employing the strength now consecrated to the defence of his tribe in the destruction of his fellow-creatures.

Now this natural tendency to ferocity, which may expend itself upon wild beasts, was very probably stronger in the first inhabitants of the earth. When, in ancient history, we study the cause of the determination made by thousands of husbands and fathers to surrender their independence and many of their rights of domestic sovereignty into the hands of one of their number, we find that the fear of wild beasts, and gratitude towards their destroyers, greatly influenced the choice of the monarchs. What were the greatest part of the gods, demi-gods, and heroes of antiquity among the pagans—Apollo, Hercules, Theseus, etc., but *great hunters*, like the Nimrod of the Scriptures. By their exploits against monsters, they seated themselves upon thrones, which, in course of time, were transformed by the admiration of the people into altars.\*

Not only did the perpetual hostility of predacious animals cause men to cling together in friendly brotherhood, it also gave a fresh impulse to arts and industry. To secure themselves from destruction, men were obliged to build houses, surround their fields with fences, guard their domestic animals, and form offensive and defensive weapons. The necessity of observing and discovering the habits of these animals was a fruitful source of knowledge and riches. The bee and the silk worm, when once known, were removed from their forests to labour for man. The elephant, dromedary, and camel became beasts of burden to the people of India and Africa; the rein-deer bestowed its invaluable services upon the inhabitants of the Pole; the hawk and falcon laid their prey at the feet of man; the pigeon became his messenger. The most dangerous and untameable species also paid tribute to man; the viper gave its medicinal properties; the tiger and panther their skins; the whale its oil and bones.

To what conclusions must these reflections lead us? I. That those animals which are apparently the most noxious, have been, and still are, in the hands of God, agents for the education of man, the guardians, and in many ways the generators of those vegetable and animal riches of which our ignorance vainly imagines them to be the scourge; II. That according to the rules

\* Genesis x. 8, 9. The Almighty assigns the danger of wild beasts overrunning Palestine as the reason of his patience with the Cananeans. "*I will not cast them out from thy face in one year;*" he says to Moses, "*lest the land be brought into a wilderness, and the beasts multiply against thee.*" Exodus xxii. 29.

of analogy, none but men who delight in doubting every thing, can doubt the real usefulness of other such animals, though reasons for their existence are as yet unknown to us.

I have now, I think, said sufficient to prove that fundamental truth, which you yourself named at the beginning of our demonstrations of the existence of God, a truth that may be expressed in the following terms: "The order and goodness every where clearly displayed in the universe can only be explained by the fact of the existence of an Infinitely wise and good Disposer of all things: the disorder and evil we fancy we behold can be more than sufficiently accounted for by our ignorance, and likewise by our depravity." Having thus defined the principle, let us proceed to the inference.

*Ques.*—What may that inference be?

*Ans.*—It will form the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VI.

*That God must have made himself known to men in a mode suited to their nature.*

*Ques.*—I do not at all see how this proposition can be deduced from the preceding considerations.

*Ans.*—By bestowing a little attention on the subject, you soon will.

The world is governed by an infinitely wise and good Monarch, who extends his care to every created thing, has assigned to each its particular place and office, and has not bestowed any faculty except for some particular end: this is a general fact, the truth of which we have proved, and which you no longer doubt. Now, do you not think that the family of man must occupy a distinguished place among the many vegetable and animal families, in the constitution and government of which so much wisdom is displayed?

*Ques.*—Yes; it must certainly hold the first place, since human beings, by their sublime faculties, not only have power over all animals, vegetables, and minerals, but even contemplate the worlds above, and seek to penetrate the mysteries of the universal system.

*Ans.*—Man is then endowed with a faculty peculiar to himself and with inclinations superior to those possessed even by such animals as in the perfection of their organisation and instincts

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most resemble him. Animals not only do not concern themselves about ultramundane affairs, but have never been known to take interest in any thing but what directly touches themselves. Entirely absorbed in the performance of their own peculiar tasks, which they accomplish with undeviating exactness, and according to one unchangeable rule, they are neither curious, criticising, nor self improving. They care as little for the future as for the past, and feel no anxiety about the present, when once they have had their daily food: they are good agents, appointed to perform certain services in our earthly abode, but agents with capacities limited to their office, who will never do more than their instinct teaches them.

Man, on the contrary, aspires to see, to know, to reform, and to make use of every thing as a means of rising above his present condition, and of attaining that more perfect state, of which the mysterious idea never leaves him, and the incessant desire every where haunts him. These great powers must have some purpose: these desires and inclinations some object. It is indispensably necessary that man should be acquainted with this purpose and object: otherwise, although superior to all other beings, he would be the only one deprived of the light required for the accomplishment of his destiny. Can you seriously think that the God who has provided for the life of the smallest insects and plants, can have left man ignorant of the end for which he was created?

*Ques.*—You know how the Deists usually answer such reasoning. Their objections may be reduced to these two axioms:—1. The light of reason is sufficient to guide man; 2. It would be a degradation of the Infinite Majesty of God to become our schoolmaster.

*Ans.*—I beg you, in the first place, to admire the logic of the Deists in these two assertions: 1. Man is too great to require Divine teaching; 2. Man is too insignificant for the Almighty to deign to instruct him.

As the first of these objections has been demolished by what we have already said concerning the utter insufficiency of reason to enlighten us about our destiny, let us go on to the second, and learn how to answer those men who are so wonderfully zealous for the Divine Glory as to think it right that God should give us bodily food and aid us to digest it, but who think it derogatory to his dignity to bestow upon us that knowledge which is necessary for the wellbeing of the soul.

The two sources of light to which you are perpetually referring me—viz., reason and the book of nature, show that God

does not participate in your childish ideas about his dignity. His glory consists in despising nothing that he has made, and in providing for all the wants of the immense family of created beings. Not satisfied with magnificently clothing the grass of the fields, he feeds the birds of the air, and has even endowed them with wisdom. Whatever idea you may have of animals, whether, with Descartes, you consider them as mere machines, or whether you allow them to be endowed with an intrinsic principle of activity, you must always, unless you deny the evidence of your senses, acknowledge in them a Divine *Revelation*, that is, a manifestation of Divine wisdom, appropriate to their wants and their destiny. What grounds therefore, can you have, O Deists! for asserting that the Divine Teacher of the sparrow, of the butterfly, of the caterpillar, of the invisible animalcule, cannot, without compromising his dignity, become *the Teacher of man*?\*

Not only does reason prove the absolute necessity of a Divine Revelation suited to our nature and our destiny, but plants and animals themselves demand it for us.

Now such a Revelation, to be suited to our nature, must be—I. exterior, evident, and transmitted to the soul by the sense of hearing, or of sight; II. not confined to the individual, but common; III. universal. Finally, it would be most suitable for man to receive this Revelation from God himself, clothed in human flesh.

*Ques.*—These four conditions, particularly the last, would remove many difficulties.

*Ans.*—Allow me, then, to justify them in a few words.

I. Revelation to man ought to be *exterior*, evident, and transmitted to the soul through the senses; why? Because these are man's natural means of receiving instruction. His mind can be enlightened and instructed only by words. Words reach him from without—he learns, but does not invent them. God has given man the power of speech, therefore he must have spoken to him, and have given him a word of truth, which had power to impart life to his soul, as he has given him food to support the life of the body; for *man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*† So in fact, all nations have ever acknowledged one or several speaking gods, and the existence of a *Divine word* communicated to man. The dumb God of the Deists is the most unknown of

\* *Qui docet hominem scientiam.* Psal. xciii. 10.

† Matthew iv. 4.



all false gods; and when those wretched sophists tell us that God speaks to us by our reason, universal good sense replies: Our reason is not the Word of God, but the faculty of receiving and understanding that Word, and in default of that Word, reason remains lost in the depths of ignorance.

II. Revelation must be bestowed, *not individually*, but *in common*. It must descend from the Society to the individual: why? Because men are evidently intended not to live separately, but socially; and society cannot exist without community of thought and feeling. Therefore has God ordained that men should bestow intellectual and moral life upon one another by means of teaching, in the same manner as corporal life is transmitted from one to the other by generation. Animals beget but do not teach one another; their knowledge is infused, is born and dies with them. With us, on the contrary, knowledge can be acquired but slowly, and at the expense of much labour; it can be quickly lost again, and preserved only through those means by which it was attained: study and instruction.

III. Revelation must be *universal*, in two ways: 1st, it must speak to all men; for our Heavenly Father *will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*.\* 2ndly, it must impart the fundamental principles of universal knowledge; for, according to your own observation, man is, by the tendencies of nature, a universal being who soars above this visible sphere seeking the reason of the existence of himself and of all creatures. This reason can only be learned from God; therefore God, who has proportioned the capacity of animals to the task they have to accomplish, and bestowed on them knowledge according to that capacity, must likewise impart to man, in proportion to his capacity, sufficient knowledge of the universal plan for him to understand and perform his part therein.

These three characteristics of such a Divine Revelation as man needed are not ideal, but are logical deductions from general laws, and from the special laws of our nature. Perhaps you may now begin to perceive how possible, nay, suitable, is the Revelation of the Gospel made by a God-man.

*Ques.*—No, I do not perceive any thing of the kind; the idea of a God made man appears to me, if not revolting to reason, at least anomalous and startling.

*Ans.*—To whose reason is it startling? To that of the Deists, very probably; for mankind in general have been so little startled by this idea, that faith in the true God made man

\* 1st Epistle to Timothy, ii. 4.

has alone cured them of the folly of making gods of men. In order to show you that this idea, or rather fact, is by no means anomalous, let us return for a moment to the school of nature.

What is a plant? Material elements, partly fixed and partly gaseous, which Divine wisdom brings together, and arranges so as to make them produce the wonderful effects we meditated upon in the second chapter. What is an insect, for example, the butterfly? Again, inert and blind elements, which Divine wisdom so brings together and arranges, as to make thereof a being endowed with life, and wonderful instincts. By observing the treasures of wisdom that are displayed in the organisation and movements of this plant and insect, we could not avoid seeing therein a sort of *real presence*, a visible manifestation of supreme power and wisdom. Now, if, in order to bring about such comparatively unimportant results as the life of a plant or insect, the Divinity descends even to it, can any one be surprised that, in order to deliver mankind from the most frightful errors, *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the fulness of the Godhead*,\* should dwell in a human body? Reflect, and you will perceive that the distance, which separates the facts presented to us by nature from those we read in the Gospel, is not so great as you suppose; and that if the universe is the material symbol, the book of engravings which God has placed before our eyes, the Gospel is its explanation and complement.

Thus, the study of the first fact conducts us directly to that of the second.

## II.—THE EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

### CHAPTER I.

*That the Existence of Jesus Christ is the most celebrated fact in History.*

*Ques.*—I have no idea of reviving the dreams of the mathematician Dupuis, and the German theologian Strauss, concerning the *fabulous origin* of Christ. I must even say with the Rationalist, P. Leroux, "That it is utter folly to deny the

\* Colossians, ii. 3—9.

existence of Jesus."\* But is there not some exaggeration in calling this the most celebrated fact in history?

*Ans.*—You shall judge for yourself. What constitutes the importance and historical celebrity of any fact is not so much its intrinsic lustre, as the number and value of the historical facts which pertain to it, and of which it is the centre and source. The star at the extremity of the tail of Ursa Minor is certainly not the most brilliant in the firmament; and yet it is the most familiar to travellers on land and sea, because it forms the centre of the Northern Hemisphere. The existence of Jesus Christ is the Polar Star, not merely of half, but of all human history. The life of *the Son of Man*, who was born in Bethlehem, and died on Calvary, may at the first glance appear obscure; but it possesses this unexampled peculiarity, that it casts light upon all preceding ages, and receives light from them. As St. Paul says: *The end of the law is Christ.* (Romans, x. 4.) It is impossible to understand the mysterious but undeniable existence of the Jewish people, their religious and political legislation, or their historical, prophetic, and poetical writings, unless we see therein a preparation for the coming of Christ. And it is clearly proved at present, that the faith of the Jews in a future Redeemer of mankind has been the faith of all the nations of antiquity, without one known exception, and the common basis of all theology and religion.†

If I have thought it right thus to point out to you that singular quality in the existence of Jesus Christ, which rendered him the *Desired of Nations*, the *Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world*,‡ my engagement to avoid prolixity will prevent my touching ever so briefly on the *accomplishment of the prophecies and figures of antiquity in his person*. Omitting therefore all that preceded the coming of Christ, I shall confine myself to its subsequents, and I hope to be able to show you, that the brightest stars of history grow dim in presence of this sun of the modern world.

I invite you to compare with Christ in the balance of history, not Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Mahomet, or any other famous individual, but that regal people, that mass of great names and great events, which, from the time of Romulus to that of Augustulus, occupies the space of twelve centuries. Now,

\* See the dialogue which he has placed at the head of the illustrated edition of the *Fables* of P. Lachambeaudie.

† See *Lamennais, Essai sur l'indifférence*, t. 10. Schmit, *de la Rédemption du genre humain*.

‡ Apoc. xiii. 8.

I maintain that the proofs of the existence of the Roman empire are far from equalling, in number and value, those of the existence of Jesus Christ.

*Ques.*—Do you not promise too much? Your thesis has, at the very outset, this embarrassing fact against it: No one has ever doubted the existence of the Romans, but many have doubted, and still doubt, the historical reality of Jesus Christ.

*Ans.*—Yes; but this fact can embarrass only those who are such tyros in the study of mankind, as not to know, that, *if the passions were interested in denying the truth of this axiom, two and two are four, many would be found to disbelieve it.* On the other hand, all your doubts will speedily vanish if we confront the respective proofs of the existence of the Romans, and of the existence of Jesus Christ—proofs which may be divided into *written* proofs, *silent* proofs, and *living* proofs that speak for themselves.

I. By *written* proofs, I mean all literature, of whatever kind—inscriptions, etc., whether written on paper, stone, or metal. Let us enter into the largest and most complete library; or rather let us suppose all the literature remaining of the Roman epoch, and of Christianity, heaped up in the same library. Let us place on one side all that is exclusively Roman, and on the other all that is exclusively Christian.

In opposition to those volumes containing the Roman law, with its commentaries, from the law of the Twelve Tables down to the edicts of Tiberius, let us bring forward the Bible with its countless commentaries, the Canon Law, together with the collection of Pontifical Bulls, the Decrees of general and particular Councils, etc. From the time when Christianity became connected with the Roman law, let us divide the part that pertains to Christianity from what pertains to Paganism.

By the side of the general and partial historians of the exploits of the great empire, let us place the writers of the general and partial histories of Christianity; in opposition to Plutarch and the other Pagan biographers of the great men of their day, let us adduce the fifty-eight enormous folio volumes of the Bollandists, and the thirty or forty thousand lives of saints and heroes, all of which are but imitations of the life of Christ.

In opposition to the ancient mythologists, poets, philosophers, and writers of all kinds, let us bring forward the overwhelming multitude of our theologians, apologists, controversialists, critics, liturgical and ascetic writers, poets, philosophers, etc., all of whom have proved the fact of the existence of Jesus Christ, even those who have, alas, attempted to paint it in false colours.

Finally, if we compare the number of inscriptions invoking

the God of the Cross, and the millions and millions of acts bearing, *The year of Christ . . .* with the tubular inscriptions invoking *the infernal gods*, and the public and private acts dating from any given *Consulate . . .* it must appear evident, even to those who are the most wilfully blind, that the *written* proofs of the existence of Christ infinitely exceed in number all such proofs, as now survive, of the existence of the Romans.

II. *Silent* proofs. By these I mean public and private monuments, temples, theatres, triumphal arches, aqueducts, roads, baths, palaces or villas, tombs, statues, arms, medals, etc.

These vestiges of the existence of the most famous empire of the world have become extremely rare, and are as nothing in comparison with the monuments of the reign of Jesus Christ. Count, if possible, the millions and millions of cathedrals, parish churches, churches attached to monasteries, chapels, and public and private oratories, in which the genius of faith has sought for the last fifteen hundred years by means of the sciences and fine arts, to celebrate and symbolise in a thousand different ways, every step taken by Jesus Christ while on earth—his every word—his every institution. Passing by in silence the innumerable other monuments, count the crosses which on the summits of our religious edifices, on the tops of the mountains by the roadside, in our cemeteries, by our bedsides, on the crowns of kings, on the breasts of the brave, on the bosom of the nun and of the Christian maiden, proclaim the accomplishment of these incredible words: *When I am nailed on an ignominious cross, the whole world will adore me!*

III. *Living* proofs, that speak for themselves. Name, I will not say a nation, but an individual, who can affirm: "I am descended by my paternal and maternal ancestors in a direct line from the Masters of the World, and that honour is so dear to me that I would die rather than renounce it." There remain to us merely a few bones of *real* Romans, and they have been preserved solely through the piety of the Christians.

But the descendants of Christ, that immense family adoring in Jesus Christ the true God made man to reconcile man with God; do you not behold Europe and America peopled with them? Do you not behold their flourishing colonies overspreading Asia, Africa, Oceanica, and all the Archipelagoes of the seas? Christians form, if not the largest, at least the most favoured portion of the inhabitants of the globe, and exercise undivided sway everywhere, in virtue of their moral and material superiority. Notwithstanding the scandalous manner in which they have abused their superior knowledge and

strength, their religion, even in the opinion of those who reject it, has ever been superior to every other. The Brahmins, Siamese, and Budhists frequently say to our missionaries: "The religion of Christ is far more admirable and holy than ours, but it is beyond our capacities, and likewise, it seems, beyond those of many Europeans." Do not the rulers of China speak of the religion of Christ by the glorious title of *the Religion of the Lord of Heaven*, in their edicts, whether favourable or otherwise? Finally, does not even the Koran render homage to the Son of the Virgin, and to his divine mission?

Let us now compare these two facts together. To the most enlightened half of the universe, the existence of the ancient masters of the world is known only by hearsay; and to the remaining half their very name is unknown. The existence of Jesus Christ, on the contrary, is the object of religious faith, and the basis on which society rests among all Christian nations, and among an innumerable multitude of Christians dispersed all over the globe, while it is likewise the object of the respect or hatred of all non-Christian nations. How then can any man believe in the existence of the Romans, and doubt that of Jesus Christ?

*Ques.*—I think your reasoning is unanswerable, excepting that by counting all the inhabitants of Christian countries as *speaking* witnesses of the existence of Jesus Christ, you are liable to an error. I agree with you in considering as such the crowds of tepid, careless Christians, whose faith is awakened only by the sting of death; for the testimony of one man given at that last great hour, is of more weight than all the incredulous speeches of an Infidel in good health. But I think you ought not to include in your calculation those Infidels who labour to destroy the memory of Christ and of his law, and their number, unfortunately, is by no means small.

*Ans.*—The Infidels have assisted as much, and more than any one, to make known the name of Jesus Christ. Is it not to them that we are indebted for those most perfect witnesses of the truth of Christianity, *who give testimony, not by speaking, but by dying*—the martyrs? From the days when Christ himself was crucified, and his persecutors, after having forced Pilate to sentence him to death, asked for soldiers to guard his tomb, and sealed it with their own seal, down to the modern times when Atheists exclaim: "Let us annihilate the memory of Christ by proscribing his priests, and either destroying his altars, or placing upon them prostitutes," what has been the result of so many crafty and furious efforts against the work of

Christ? Only to give incontestable evidence of this peculiar property of Christianity; that it increases in proportion to the very efforts made to destroy it. "It has resisted everything; it has resisted the evil influence of peace and of war, of disgrace and of triumph, of the sword, of pleasures, of pride, of humiliations, of poverty, of riches, of the darkness of the middle ages, and of the bright light of the ages of Leo X., and of Louis XIV." \*

However, we do not need the testimony of the enemies of religion to prove the fact of the existence of Jesus Christ; that of true Christians is amply sufficient.

*Ques.*—Men might say that their testimony is interested.

*Ans.*—Such a speech would have no sense in it. Who can possibly be more nearly concerned in learning the truth about the existence of Christ, and in not admitting it without sufficient proof, than a Christian, upon whom that fact imposes obligations so serious, and so repugnant to nature?

*Man is not born a Christian, but becomes one.*† He is naturally an unbeliever, averse to the restraint of the Gospel, and always has certain reasons for remaining an unbeliever.

Man does not live the life of a Christian except in the sweat of his brow, and by constant struggles against the ever recurring temptations of his mind and heart.

It is therefore perfectly true, that all those, who observe the law of Christ, are martyrs of various degrees and kinds. Those who are not called upon to die for their faith, offer up at least in sacrifice to it the long and painful struggle against those desires, which most annoy the soul of mortal man. Now, if we are, as Pascal says, to believe *witnesses who brave death*, should we not make some account of the testimony of millions and millions of Christians, who have put to death the *old man* within them, in order to live the life of the *new man*?

*Ques.*—You have very ably refuted the objections of those who attempt to weaken the force of the proofs drawn from universal faith in Christ, by saying, that Christians are witnesses in their own cause. Still, must you not acknowledge that custom and example have much to do with the Christianity of the bulk of the people, and that many persons are Christians more from imitation than from conviction?

*Ans.*—No doubt, in the religious family, as in the domestic and the civil family, the strong influence the weak, and the

\* M. de Maistre, *Considerations sur la France*.

† *Fiant, non nascuntur christiani*—Tertullian's Apology, xvii.

numbers of the weak only serve to evince the power of the strong. Wherever you see numbers of healthy, well-dressed children at play, there you know are many industrious and careful fathers and mothers. In like manner, the religious weakness of the majority of Christians, and their inclination to return to the worship of gods of gold, silver and clay, prove the moral strength of those who retain such half pagan natures within the pale of Christianity.

On the other hand, however, you must not exaggerate the force of custom and example in this matter. If you explain the faith of our fathers of the fifteenth century by the force of custom, how will you account for the faith of the Catholics of the nineteenth century, after the numerous efforts which have been made by anti-Catholicism, in every shape and form, to destroy within our souls the habit of faith? If you think that the ancient manners of Europe sufficiently account for what remains there of Catholic faith, how can you account for the faith of the Catholics of Turkey, India, China, Tong-King, etc? And after all, you will have to account for the faith of the Europeans of the first ages, who could not embrace the religion of the crucified Galilean, without acting in opposition to ideas, manners, customs, and institutions of immemorial antiquity, without giving up their dearest affections, incurring the contempt and hatred of all mankind, being burnt by a slow fire, or torn to pieces by iron combs or by the teeth of lions and panthers, amid the unanimous applause of all the spectators, whether rich or poor, as the pagan Tacitus assures us?\*

Finally, there is one custom, which may explain to a certain extent the triumph and preservation of the Catholic faith, but which is itself *naturally* inexplicable, and would alone afford an undeniable proof of the existence of Jesus Christ.

*Ques.*—And what may that custom be?

*Ans.*—The custom followed by the priests and faithful of the Catholic Church from time immemorial, of facing death calmly and even joyfully, to prove to the world that the Son of Mary is the Son of God, who was made man, and died on the cross for the salvation of all.

The number of martyrs may be disputed (God alone knows it exactly), but it is well known that it amounts to millions, from the deacon St. Stephen, who was stoned at Jerusalem, down to our missionaries of the present day, who annually go in numbers to be strangled, cut to pieces, crushed, roasted and eaten in Asia

\* Annal, Book xv. 44.



and in the South Sea Islands. Not to speak of the frightful massacres of the Christians which were begun by Nero, and terminated only in the reign of Constantine, massacres which were renewed in later times by the Vandals and Goths, how every step taken by the Church has been marked by the traces of Catholic blood ! What rivers of it were shed in Europe in the sixteenth century ! What seas in Japan, in 1637, when all that remained of her eighteen hundred thousand Christians were put to death ! What an outrage to history and to common sense, what fanatical madness to accuse of fanaticism the thousands of bishops and priests who went like lambs into the midst of wolves, in order to change the wolves into lambs by no other means than the doctrine of *the Good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep* ; to accuse of fanaticism those friends of God and of man who, braving the most terrible tortures without ostentation and without weakness, died with this sublime prayer of their Divine Master on their lips : *Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit, and forgive my executioners, for they know not what they do* ; to accuse of fanaticism the thousands of Christians who have followed these to the scaffold, when had they but uttered one word they would have been loaded with favours ; to confound these armies of heroes, to whom we are indebted for the honour of being Christians, with a few hundred fanatics who, by their outrages and rebellions, brought themselves to the gibbet or the stake !

And you must not either think that martyrdom is always the result of an entirely Christian education, or of that fervour which is natural to new converts. Look at the soldiers of the African army, when they fell into the hands of the fanatical Mahometans : "Deny Christ, and believe in Mahomet, or die !" was said to them. But yesterday, perhaps, many of those brave men paid as little attention to the law of Christ as to that of Mahomet ; but their faith revived beneath the pressure of impending death, and they all answered : "We will die !"\*

The ever subsisting custom of dying for Christ proves not only that Christ really did exist, but also that in dying he has never ceased to live and reign over souls with incomparable power. This eminently sensible reflexion was made by the prisoner of St. Helena, in conversation with one of the companions of his captivity, who appeared to consider Christ merely in the

\* "The French soldiers who fell into the hands of the Arabs during the war, even those from the Rue Mouffetard, refused to embrace Mahometanism to save their lives." M. L. Veuillot, *Les libres penseurs*.

light of a great genius. After various considerations well suited to dispel such ideas, Napoleon concluded in the following terms :

“The triumph of charity is, without dispute, the greatest of the miracles of Christ. He, and he only, has succeeded in raising the heart of man above visible things, even to the sacrifice of time ; he alone, by establishing such an immolation, has established a link between heaven and earth.

“All those who sincerely believe in him experience this admirable, supernatural, all powerful love, which is an inexplicable phenomenon, and cannot be attained by the reason and strength of man ; it is a sacred fire which has been given to earth by this new Prometheus, and of which time, that great destroyer of all things, can neither waste the strength nor limit the duration. I, Napoleon, admire this fact more than any other, because I have often reflected upon it, and it affords me complete proof of the Divinity of Christ !

“I have fascinated multitudes who would have died for me. God forbid that I should form any comparison between the enthusiasm of my soldiers and Christian charity, which are as different from one another as their causes !

“But, in fine, it was by my presence, by the electricity of my glance, by one single word that I lighted the sacred fire in all hearts . . . . Certainly I possess the secret of that magic power which carries the mind of man along with it, but I could not communicate it to any one ; not one of my generals has received or imbibed it from me ; neither have I the secret of causing my name and my love for ever to remain enshrined in the heart of man, and of working wonders therein, unassisted by matter.

“Now that I am at St. Helena, . . . . now that I am fastened down alone upon this rock, who fights my battles, and conquers empires for me ? Where are the courtiers of my misfortunes ? Do men think of me ? Who exerts himself for me in Europe ? Who has remained faithful to my cause ? Where are my friends ? . . . . Yes, two or three, immortalised by their fidelity, partake and console my exile ! . . . .

“Such is the fate of great men ! such is the fate of Cæsar and Alexander ; and then we are forgotten ! and the name of a conqueror, as well as that of an emperor, is nothing more than the subject of a college theme ! Our exploits are at the mercy of any pedant who chooses to praise or insult us !

“How many and various judgments are passed on the great Louis XIV. ! Scarcely was he dead, than the great king himself was left alone in the solitude of his bedroom at Versailles . . . . neglected by his courtiers, and perhaps their laughing-

stock ! He was no longer their master, but a corpse, the tenant of a coffin and a grave, and an object of horror from the fear of that decomposition which had already begun !

"A few moments more, and such will be my fate ! I am dying before my time, assassinated by the English oligarchy, and my dead body will be, in like manner, restored to the earth to be the food of worms !

"Such is the approaching fate of the great Napoleon ! What an abyss is there between the depths of my misery and the eternal reign of Christ, who is preached, praised, loved, adored, and living throughout the universe ! . . . Can that be called death ? Is it not rather life ? Behold the death of Christ ! behold the death of a God !"

The Emperor here ceased to speak, and as General Bertrand also preserved silence : "If you do not understand," continued the Emperor, "that Jesus Christ is God, I can only say that I was mistaken in ever making you a general !!!"\*

Let us conclude. If the sight of the physical universe proves the incessant action of an Eternal Ruler, imparting life and motion to matter, as we have shown in the study of the first fact, does not the sight of Christianity, ever living in that human nature which is so opposed to it, prove that the Founder of the Christian world is, like the Creator of the physical world, the very Being of beings ?

For the present, let us confine our efforts to proving the reality of the human and historical life of Jesus Christ, and returning once more to our original comparison, sum up our proofs as follows : If no one can doubt the fact of the historical existence of the Roman empire, without proving himself to be either out of his senses or childishy ignorant, what can we say of those writers and speakers who assert that Jesus Christ is but an imaginary being, the offspring of a disordered brain, or invented merely to serve an end ?

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## CHAPTER II.

*That the Historical Character of Jesus Christ is that of Universal Restorer of the Rights of God and of Mankind.*

*Ques.*—What do you mean by Universal Restorer of the rights of God and of mankind ?

\* See *Reflexions of Napoleon on the Divinity of Christianity, in the Solution of Great Problems*, vol. i. 336, and following.

*Ans.*—I mean that mankind is indebted to Jesus Christ for the most extensive and happy revolution conceivable; and that this benefit, when compared with the labours of the most renowned men, raises its author infinitely above all the social and religious reformers of whom history can boast.

You are no doubt aware that at the period of the coming of Jesus Christ, ignorance and contempt of the rights of God and of man had reached their greatest height, and nowhere more than among those nations which were the most renowned for knowledge and power—the Greeks and the Romans.

With the exception of the Jewish family, which still worshipped the *God of gods*, that Eternal, Infinite Monarch, whose existence, unity, wisdom, and adorable power were loudly proclaimed to every intelligent mind by the voice of all nature, to whom were the homage and prayers, due only to the Creator of all things, directed by man?

They were directed to an infinite number of fantastical, ridiculous, monstrous divinities, the history and worship of which were a series of abominations and follies. "Everything was God, except God himself," says Bossuet, "and the world was one vast temple of idols . . . Who could ever describe the ceremonies and impure mysteries of the immortal gods? Their loves, cruelties, jealousies, and vices were celebrated in their feasts and their sacrifices, in the hymns that were sung in their honour, and in the sacred paintings which adorned their temples . . . There was no portion of man's life from which modesty was so carefully banished as from the mysteries of religion."\*

Idolatry was not only the permanent school of immorality, but it likewise solemnly sanctified all national prejudices and antipathies between nation and nation, between city and city. Like so many heads of contending and jealous parties, the gods and goddesses of each country divided the human race into thousands of hostile sects, and fostered in the breasts of their adorers strong hatred and contempt for all who were strangers to their faith.

Finally, it was in consequence of its thus degrading the divinity by supposing it to reside in the most abject beings, that pagan theology produced Atheism. Lucilius and Lucretius, employing the scourge of satire against the ignoble crowd of male and female gods, the number of whom amounted to thirty thousand in the days of Varro, restored the materialist philosophy of Epicurus to an honourable position, and confined the religion of the

\* *Discours sur l'His. Univ.*

great to the worship of luxury, and their policy to these words of Julius Cæsar, "*Mankind is a species of prey, intended to be devoured by the strongest.*" Therefore, society, whether domestic or civil, presented everywhere the barbarous spectacle of the strong trampling under foot the immense crowd of the weak and humble, and profiting without mercy by their sufferings and death.

How humiliating and painful was the position of woman, even where polygamy did not reduce her to the situation of a worthless animal made for the service of man! How frightfully inhuman was that custom among parents of strangling a portion of their children at their birth, or exposing them on the public roads! And this custom was so common, that Tertullian, when defending the Christians from the absurd accusation of infanticide, did not fear to defy their accusers and judges in the following terms: "How many are there among you who are thirsting for Christian blood, and among the most upright of your judges, and the most severe to us, who can swear to me on their consciences, that they have never dipped their hands in the blood of their new-born babes?"\* How barbarous was the manner in which the slaves were treated—the slaves who formed the great majority of the people, and whose massacre in the amphitheatre formed one of the most agreeable pastimes of the masters of the world! How much inhumanity was likewise displayed in those exterminating wars by which Rome changed the most populous districts of the earth into deserts inhabited by a few soldiers and slaves, and established its empire upon *the depopulation of the universe!*†

Nothing, therefore, was more necessary even for the temporal salvation of mankind, than that the Law of the Gospel should triumph, destroy the brutal institutions of idolatry and atheism, and establish social and religious order upon the basis of these two new Commandments: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and him only shalt thou serve. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Does not the Author of this Revolution which has changed the whole face of the world, deserve the title of *Universal Restorer of the rights of God and of man?*

*Ques.*—Most unbelievers make no difficulty in acknowledging Christ to be the Revealer and Propagator of those two great fundamental principles of universal civilization; the unity of God, and the fraternity of mankind. But they would wish to

\* Apology, chap. ix.

† Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, liv. xxiii. ch. 18, 19.

go no further, and accuse the disciples of Jesus Christ of having corrupted the beautiful simplicity of his doctrine and life by unintelligible dogmas and fabulous legends.

*Ans.*—Yes; unbelievers are great enemies of mysteries and miracles. There is one thing for which they never can forgive the Apostles and their successors—and that is, not having been honest Deists, combatting error and vice by fine sounding words which could inconvenience none of our passions. They imagine that in order to destroy the time-honoured worship of idols, and convert the world from the most hateful religious and social institutions to the law of the Gospel, it would have been sufficient for Peter, and Paul, and John, to go and say to the nations of the East and West, of the North and South, “We announce to you great and glad tidings, which we have received from a certain carpenter of our country, who was unjustly put to death by the magistrates of Judea—and these tidings are: There is but one God in Heaven, and all men are brethren. Therefore, away with all doubt on these points, throw down your idols at once, and begin to treat your wives, children, and slaves with more humanity.”

Certainly, the Gospel would thus be reduced to very great simplicity; but I think you must own that the conversion of an idolatrous world by such a system of evangelization would be the greatest of mysteries, and the most incredible of miracles. It is an historical fact that polytheism has been destroyed only by faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and by the invincible constancy of the first Christians in giving their lives for the defence of these same dogmas, which they are accused of having invented. At the foot of the cross, and there only, after having adored the Son of God immolated for the salvation of all mankind, have men acknowledged themselves to be brethren and children of the same God. In presence of this incontestible fact, is it not audacious to pronounce those dogmas unintelligible, which have dispelled the senseless errors of idolatry, and to which we are indebted for the whole of our knowledge of the Divine Being, and of the origin and destiny of mankind? For unbelievers no doubt consider that the dogmas of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption, occupy the first place among the so-called unintelligible dogmas.

*Ques.*—Yes; a God at once one and three, and made man in order to expiate the sins of men by an ignominious death, are, they say, things which quite upset all our ideas of the essence and majesty of the Being of beings.

*Ans.*—And whence can these deep thinkers have drawn the

said ideas that are incompatible with the plurality of the Divine Persons, and with the fact of the Incarnation? Not from Pagan theology which acknowledged innumerable divine persons, and clothed them in human form; nor yet from Christian theology, which has been grounded for eighteen centuries upon faith in one God in three Divine Persons, and in the Son made man. Did they draw their ideas from the great book of nature, the Gospel of the Deists? The unity of the system of the world proves, it is true, a unity of intelligence and action in the Being who formed and governs it; but it gives us no information whatever concerning the Interior Life of this great Being. Do the unity and indivisibility of the Divine Perfections prevent their being communicated to more than one person, do they exclude all generation and society from the Infinite Essence, and do they condemn the Almighty to everlasting solitude? "Yes;" answer the unbelievers, but their proofs are never forthcoming. "No;" answers the whole Christian universe, which adores in Jesus Christ *the only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and who has declared to us God, whom no man hath seen at any time.\**

With regard to the fact of the Divine Word taking flesh in order to raise men from the life of the flesh to the life of the spirit, I have already shown you how the book of nature prepares our mind to believe it.† What, indeed, is the whole material creation? A work in which the Almighty has portrayed himself—it is the Divine perfections taking, as it were, a form in order to manifest themselves to the mind of man, which cannot rise to the comprehension of the invisible, except by the aid of visible things. As men remained insensible to this great Manifestation, and made unto themselves gods to their own image and likeness, was it not worthy of the Divine wisdom and goodness to appear to them clothed in that human form with which they invested their gods? It is evident that such was the best possible method of restoring both God and man to the possession of their rights. In fact, God reigns in our hearts only so far as we love and fear him; and we love and fear him only in proportion to the idea we entertain of his goodness and justice. Now, the fact of the Incarnation and Redemption contains the greatest possible manifestation of the goodness and of the justice of God. *God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son; . . . . . For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. . . . . In this*

\* 1 John, i. 18.

† Fact 1st, chap. 6.

*have we known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us.\** Can any Christian who attends to these words, and who beholds in the Child of the manger, in the humble Workman of Nazareth, in the Crucified Man of Calvary, the Son of the Most High God—God himself—can this Christian remain indifferent?

Moreover, the love of Christ has not been satisfied with dying once for us. On the eve of the day when he was to be immolated on the cross, *loving to the end his own who were in the world*, according to the expression of St. John, he ordained that the real, though unbloody immolation of his Body and Blood should be perpetuated through the course of ages, and that thus Christians living even at the very end of time, should receive Him whole and entire as Food and as Drink, and have no cause to envy those disciples who *had seen him with their eyes, and handled him with their hands.*† Unbelievers will not fail to say that this mystery is an insult to reason. Yes; but is it not evident that the obscurity of the mystery of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ on our altars, joined to the obscurity of the mystery of the Son of God made man, produces the most splendid, touching, convincing manifestation of the infinite charity of God towards the children of men?

*Ques.*—I readily perceive that when once believed, these mysteries are far more likely to enkindle the love of God and of men in the heart than the cold maxims of an unjustly crucified Jewish Socrates.

*Ans.*—That is perfectly clear. The Socrates of the Greeks has had, and still has some admirers, but has he ever had any imitators, saying like St. John and St. Paul: *The Son of God hath laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. . . . The charity of Christ presseth us . . . and Christ died for all; that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again?‡*

But at the same time that our Divine Lord furnishes us with the strongest motives for loving him (and without love nothing great can be achieved), he also knew the human heart too well not to impress it with a salutary fear of the judgments of God. In vain may philosophers repeat what the Gospel said long before them, that love is a far better motive than fear; it will not be the less true that *the fear of God is the beginning of*

\* John iii. 16, 17; 1st Epistle, iii. 16.

† 1st Epistle of St. John, i. 1.

‡ 1st Epistle of St. John, iii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.



*wisdom*, and that *perfect charity casteth out fear*, only when the fear of God has cast out the love of evil.\*

Observe the awful severity with which the rigour of Divine Justice was exercised upon the Son of God made man in order to bear the burden of the sins of the world. What was the entire life of Christ? *A never-ceasing cross and martyrdom*, replies the author of the *Imitation*. But when the last day of a long martyrdom of three and thirty years arrived at length, was there one single faculty of the soul, or portion of the body, which did not accomplish, by fearful sufferings, those prophetic words: *The pains of Hell have encompassed me*?†

The adorable Victim, *sorrowful even unto death*, implored his Father to *let the chalice pass away*, and the Father by his silence replied: "Thou must drink it even to the dregs." If he was at length comforted by an angel, it was because the executioners were approaching, and it was written that he was *to deliver up himself*.

No Christian, on beholding *the Holy of holies* treated as a *worm*, become *the reproach of men*,‡ and *bruised for our sins*,|| can blind himself to the eternal consequences of a life passed in voluntary forgetfulness of God and of his holy law. If the true believer trembles on studying the description so often given us by Jesus Christ of the prisons of eternal fire, if he then sees all the sophisms of incredulity melt away, still greater is his emotion when meditating upon these words of Jesus Christ on his way to Calvary loaded with his cross, his body torn with scourges, and his head crowned with thorns: *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; . . . for if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?*§

At the foot of the Cross there can be no medium; we must either abjure faith in Christ, or believe that *according to our hardness and impenitent hearts, we treasure up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God*.¶

Do you perceive now that the *obscure* mystery of a God dying to expiate the sins of men, has also its *bright* side, and do you believe that anything less would have been sufficient to induce men to lead a new life, and obey a law which forbids even *the shadow of sin*?

\* Psalm cx. 10; 1st Epistle of St. John, iv. 18.

† Psalm xvii. 6.

‡ Psalm xxi. 7.

|| Isaiah liii. 6.

§ Luke xxiii. 28—31.

¶ Romans ii. 5.

*Ques.*—No; anything less would not have been sufficient; and when we reflect upon the lives of the far larger portion of mankind, it is impossible not to perceive that they correspond but ill with so magnificent a display of Divine Justice and Charity; and we are tempted to ask what return Jesus Christ has received for his great sacrifice.

*Ans.*—The history of eighteen centuries will inform you that Jesus Christ has obtained thereby from an infinite number of men and women what no other power, divine or human, had been able to obtain—viz., the voluntary sacrifice of themselves.

Many idolatrous nations have sacrificed the lives of men in honour of their gods; and some have even taken up arms for the defence or propagation of their faith. But the spectacle of victims offering themselves by thousands to death for the triumph of their religious faith, is what Christianity alone has succeeded in presenting to the world.

*If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Whoever will not renounce all that he possesseth to follow me, is not worthy of me.* What language this, to be held to the contemporaries of Tiberius and Nero! Nevertheless, from the midst of an awfully corrupted and degraded society, we behold issuing forth countless legions of men, women, and children, seemingly filled with no other ambition than that of being cut to pieces, stripped of all things, tortured, and put to death for the love of Jesus Christ. And when the patience of the Christians has at length exhausted the rage of their persecutors, this singular ardour for martyrdom is not extinguished, but only changes its form, fills the deserts with penitents, invents the austerities of the cloister, and perpetuates the heroic slavery of the bishop, the priest, the nun, who devote themselves without reserve to the service of God and their brethren.

The love of God and of his law carried even to a willingness to suffer martyrdom with joy—the fear of his judgment silencing all other fears—this is what Jesus Christ has obtained, and still obtains from his followers. Thus he re-established the reign of God in the soul of man; and I am now about to show how, while he provided for the rights of God, he paid due attention to the claims of our nature.

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## CHAPTER III.

*In what manner Jesus Christ has banished barbarism from the soul of man, and placed human civilization on a firm basis.*

*Ques.*—And what may be this firm basis on which human civilization has been established?

*Ans.*—Before answering this question, I will first explain in what civilization and barbarism consist. The soul of civilization is charity, in the same manner as the soul of barbarism is egotism. The property of charity is to respect in the humblest individuals the dignity of children of God, to feel for their sufferings as for our own, and to labour according to our power and abilities to ameliorate both their physical and their moral condition. The property of egotism is to live for self, to consult our own interest in every thing, and to consider others merely in the light of instruments, more or less useful, in the gratification of our own passions and interests. Charity comes from above, is nourished only by the light of faith, and is supported only by Christian hope. Egotism is deeply rooted in our hearts, and is fortified by the sight of the natural order of things, and by the suggestions of unassisted reason. If, therefore, you leave men in their native ignorance concerning their origin, their destiny, and that supreme happiness after which they are incessantly craving; if they are left to those weak conjectures concerning the Providence of God and their own future state, which are suggested by the human conscience, and propounded and denied with equal facility by philosophical reason, you will see them wallowing as egotists in the enjoyments of this life, and enslaved to the three great passions of barbarism—pride, covetousness, and sensuality.

Pride will induce the strongest of their number to usurp, first a portion, and then the whole of the honours of Divine worship. “The great God of all things,” will they say to the vulgar, “cares not for your adoration; to us, who are his representatives, must you pay it.” And the people, adoring every thing but God himself, will divide into as many rival bodies as there are forms of national worship. The Greek will regard none as mankind but those who dwell in Greece, the Roman none but those who are of Roman descent, the Hindoo none but those who belong to the castes of India.

Covetousness will bestow upon some few favourites of the gods and demi-gods a right of property over the land and the

human beings who cultivate it; and this arrangement will be considered highly reasonable by philosophers, because nature, according to their theory, creates two species of men, one to command and enjoy, the other to obey and labour; and lest these two species should multiply too rapidly, they will recommend to parents and lawgivers infanticide, miscarriages, the sale of children, etc. Finally, the passion for sensual pleasures will produce a general debasement of morals, contempt of the sex, and sins against nature.\*

Such was the state of social order everywhere, when the Gospel was first preached, and such it is still among the non-Christian nations of Asia, Africa, and Oceanica. Men know no other so long as they are under the sole dominion of reason and nature; for their reason will always be the prime minister of the three ruling passions of the natural man: pride, covetousness, and sensuality.†

In short, non-Christian civilization will never be anything but a step forward in barbarism.

*Ques.*—Are you not afraid of disgusting by such language the admirers of Greek and Roman civilization?

*Ans.*—The history of Greek and Roman civilization affords, on the contrary, undeniable proofs of the truth of what I have just stated. Contempt of the rights of man increased in those celebrated Republics in proportion to the cultivation of philosophy, literature, and the fine arts.

Athens, in the days of its glory, numbered twenty thousand citizens, and four hundred thousand slaves. Its citizens, although models of mildness compared with the Spartans, still gravely argued this question in their schools of philosophy: *Is the slave endowed with reason, and does he differ from animals otherwise than by his organisation?* There was also a law in Athens which ordered, in case of a siege, that all heads useless to the defence of the Republic should be cut off.‡

Decimated by the sword and by fire, and sold like beasts in the Roman markets, the population of Greece disappeared

\* May I not say that a plurality of wives leads to that love which is disowned by nature: it is so, because one excess leads to another. I remember that at a revolution which took place at Constantinople, when the Sultan Achmet was deposed, it was said that when the people plundered the house of the Kiaya, they did not find a single woman: it is said also that at Algiers, not one woman would be found in the greatest part of the seraglios."—Montesquieu, *de l'Esprit des Loix*.

† See further on, book iii. comm. 1st, paragraph 11th.

‡ Montesquieu, *de l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxix. ch. 14.

prematurely from the political scene, before the world had witnessed the natural termination of a state of society, which made the liberty and happiness of one individual depend upon the degradation and misery of nineteen of his fellow-creatures. This scene was unfolded to the world by Rome, the inheritor of the philosophy and literature of the Greeks, during the second portion of its long career, and it displays an indescribable mixture of licentiousness and cruelty.

If college students, who are acquainted with this period merely through its literature, will read the sketch of the *manners of the Pagans*,\* by the author of *Etudes Historiques*, they will be compelled to acknowledge that the cannibals of the South Seas are models of humanity and morality in comparison with those accomplished generations which hung with delight upon the periods of Cicero, and the magnificent verses of Virgil and Horace.

How shameful were those laws which declaring a slave to be nobody, reduced a hundred and twenty millions of men, the hapless remnant of fifty nations which had been destroyed by stratagems and violence, to a condition lower than that of wild beasts! In fact, the Roman laws extended their protection to beasts of prey, and forbade their being killed in Africa,† but allowed the master unlimited power over his slaves, condemning the latter to death, even were their numbers sufficient to form a nation, if the master happened to perish by a violent death. ‡

Custom, even more ferocious than the law among the Romans, required that slaves, prisoners of war, and sometimes even

\* *Study the First, part 3rd.*

† Chateaubriand, *Etudes Historiques*, as quoted above: "The cruelties exercised on slaves make us shudder; if a vase were broken, orders were immediately given to throw the awkward servant into the ponds, to fatten lampreys ornamented with rings and collars. One master had a slave put to death for having wounded a wild boar with a spear, slaves not being allowed to make use of such arms. Sick slaves were abandoned or killed; working slaves passed the night chained underground; a little salt was distributed to them, and they had no air but what came through a narrow skylight. The owner of a serf could condemn him to be devoured by wild beasts, sell him to the gladiators, or compel him to commit the most infamous actions. The Roman ladies delivered up their personal attendants to suffer the most cruel punishments for the smallest fault, etc."

‡ See Montesquieu, *de l'Esprit des Loix* (on the *Sillanian senatus consultum*) book xv. ch. 15. Tacitus tells us, that this horrible law was put into execution under Nero. The four hundred slaves of Pedanius Secundus were forced to expiate in fearful tortures the crime of one of their number. In vain did the people, disgusted at the number of victims, attempt to defend them, in vain did some senators vote for a mitigation of

citizens, should kill one another *gracefully*, or that they should let themselves be devoured by wild beasts, both in the public games and at private festivals.\*

What a spectacle did Rome present! Emperors, senators, and knights, matrons, and vestals, crowding together in the amphitheatres, to enjoy the dying agonies of the victims, and returning home only to outrage nature by other no less hateful excesses!† Princes, like Titus and Trajan, devoting on one occasion three thousand, and on another, ten thousand individuals to afford them these frightful pastimes!

Historians, like Tacitus, describing the slaughter of nineteen thousand men on Lake Fucinus,‡ as a splendid festival! Moralists, like Cicero, bringing forward this question: *Is the spectacle of gladiators cruel and inhuman as some imagine it to be?* || and not daring to give an answer! Augustus alarmed, with some reason, at the decrease of population, making laws in vain to check licentiousness, to promote marriages which might at least be fruitful, if not legitimate, and to diminish the number of children thrown nightly into the marshes of Velabria,

the law; the senator C. Cassius upheld it, and gained his point by saying, that this law was more needed than ever, as owing to the number of slaves who had been brought from all countries, and were of various creeds, or without any religion at all, the Roman families had become nations. *Postquam vero nationes in familiis habemus, quibus diversi ritus, externa sacra, aut nulla sunt, colluviem istam nonnisi metu coercueris*, etc.—Tacitus *Annal*, xiv. 44.

\* “The Romans are the only people who have ever made a spectacle of homicide. Sometimes male, and even female, gladiators killed one another, as much for the amusement of the dregs of the people, as for a pastime for the most refined classes. Sometimes prisoners of war were made to fight each other on great festivals, at night, by torchlight, in the presence of abandoned and naked women; fathers, sons, and brothers were made to kill one another for the amusement of a Nero, or what is more surprising, for that of a Vespasian, or a Titus! The clashing of swords, the roaring of wild beasts, the groans of the victims, whose bowels gushed out on the sand which was perfumed with essence of saffron, or other scented waters, transported the multitude. Private festivals were rendered more agreeable by the gratification of this thirst for blood. When the guests were satiated and approaching a state of inebriety, gladiators were called for, and the rooms echoed with the sound of applause when one of the two combatants was killed. One Roman ordered in his will, that some beautiful women whom he had bought should be made to fight in that manner; and another, that some young slaves whom he had loved should undergo the same fate.”—Chateaubriand, *Etudes Historiques—Mœurs des païens*.

† See Seneca, Ep. xcv.

‡ *Annal*, xii. 56.

|| *Crudele gladiatorum spectaculum et inhumanum nonnullis videri solet; et haud scio an ita sit, ut nunc fit.*—Tuscul., quæst. iii. 41.

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and at the foot of the *Lactarian Column*!\* Can more be required to prove that *the end of Roman civilization was the utter extinction of all sense of morality, and would have been finally that of all mankind, if Jesus Christ had not appeared to proclaim the only dogma that can civilize men, that is to say, teach them to respect and love one another?*

*Ques.*—What is that dogma?

*Ans.*—*The Redemption of all men by the Son of God, and their vocation to an everlasting inheritance.*

What is the humblest individual when viewed in the position in which he has been placed by Jesus Christ? Not only is he the noblest work of Divine hands, the image of his Creator, and the possession and conquest of a Saviour-God, but he is also a member of his body, a second self. *Whatever ye have done to the least of my brethren (in good or in evil) ye have done it to me!*† Such is the law of that judgment which will decide our eternal fate. We are warned before hand, that whether our dealings are with our neighbours, our fellow citizens, the inhabitants of Europe or of Asia, with the negroes of Africa, or the *Red Skins* of the New World, it is no longer with men *as men* that we have intercourse. The Eternal Word, in uniting himself to our human nature by the closest and most indissoluble of ties, has adopted the souls and bodies of all men as members of his own. Therefore against him are committed all the injuries and injustice of which they are the victims; and woe, woe to him who does not repair them before the day of *Final Retribution*! It is he, also, who receives the morsel of bread and the cup of cold water bestowed upon the hungry and thirsty, the clothing furnished to the naked, the words of instruction and sympathy addressed to the ignorant and afflicted. At the day of *Final Retribution*, the interest to be received for a few pence now given to the distressed will defy calculation.

Jesus Christ, the all-powerful avenger of oppressed weakness, the surety of the insolvent and the ungrateful, and the magnificent remunerator of every, even the smallest, act of kindness, takes from the wicked, even though seated upon the highest throne of the universe, all hope of escaping punishment, and says to the virtuous: "Persevere in the path of virtue, and leave to me the care of enumerating thy sacrifices."

In this universal adoption of the members of the human race as his own, Jesus Christ treats the humble and the helpless,

\* See the *Histoire de la Société Domestique*, by M. l'Abbé Gaume, concerning the fate of these children.

† Matthew, xxv. 40—45.

who were so barbarously sacrificed in Pagan society, with marked predilection.

*Suffer the little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of God . . . . Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. . . . . He that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But he that shall scandalise one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea !\**

Woman, who was degraded and enslaved by all the religious and political laws ever invented by human wisdom, is elevated by our Redeemer, and transformed into a supernatural being, whether she lives the life of angels by choosing virginity, which he offers her as *the better part*, † or whether she embraces the more laborious state of marriage, and fulfils the functions, more divine than human, of bringing forth men, and educating them for Heaven. ‡ Abolishing all those concessions which the revealed law itself had made to man, on account of the *hardness of his heart*, he says to him : “ Thou art at liberty to commence here below the life thou wilt lead in Heaven, where marriage is unknown ; but if thou desirest to have a wife, thou must have but one ; thou must be but as one body and one heart with her ; thou must love her *as I love my Church*, for which I sacrifice my life. || But woe to thee if thou dost look upon any other woman to lust after her, for thou hast already committed adultery with her in thy heart ! § And adulterers shall not possess the kingdom of God ! ¶

Do you not think that this doctrine contains the germ of a radical reformation of the *natural morality* of man ?

*Ques.*—Yes ; but how great the difficulty of implanting this germ in man's heart !

*Ans.*—So great is the difficulty, that he who has overcome it, and caused his doctrines to be received by mankind, must evidently himself be more than man. But by what means did Jesus Christ induce men to make magnanimously such sacrifices, in order to embrace so perfect a law ? By dispelling the cloud that hung over futurity, and displaying before their eyes *the kingdom prepared for them by their heavenly Father from the beginning of the world.*

And what is this kingdom ? *The Heaven of Heavens*, of which

\* Matthew, xviii. 2—6 ; Mark, x. 14, 15.

† Matthew, xix. 12 ; 1st Corinthians, vii.

‡ 1st Epistle to Timothy, ii. 15.

|| Ephesians, v. 25.

§ Matthew, v. 28.

¶ 1st Corinthians, vi. 9, 10.



the millions of worlds shining in infinite space are the porch ; the eternal city, whence all evils of soul and body are for ever banished, where the purest delights shall know no limits ; where *the children of men* shall be *inebriated with plenty, and drink of the torrent of pleasure ; wherewith God is the fountain of light, and where we shall see light in the light of God.\** There the God of charity, to accomplish the work and the promises of the Word made flesh, and *make us partakers of the Divine nature,†* will transform our bodies of clay into suns of light and life incorruptible, initiate our souls into all the mysteries of Divine knowledge, invest our will with boundless power, and make us, in one word, *heirs of his greatness, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. †*

Below this kingdom in which God displays the infinite treasures of his love and power in glorifying and beatifying his children, Jesus Christ exhibits to us the kingdom of hopeless woe, and of endless ignominy and torments, which he has prepared for those who will not observe the law of justice and charity.

I beg you to observe that these two futurities which the Gospel holds forth to man as motives for overcoming his natural egotism, are not only far superior, in grandeur, and in their claims on our belief, to the systems of the Pagans concerning the eternal fate of the good and of the wicked, but moreover comprise the whole human race, and make complete and terrible reparation for all the injustice, disorder, and inequality which we observe in this life, and that is more than human theology has ever dared to do. Human theology has always contrived for the great ones of this world to be saved, and the poor and despised to be lost ; its paradise and hell being but a continuation of that social order which was established here below by inexorable divinities.

The Paradise of Mahomet is not open to women, whom he considered an inferior race of beings, and whose presence is replaced by *Houris*. The Paradise of the Hindoos excludes all women, parias, artizans, labourers, and merchants, even the noble castes of kings and soldiers are scarcely considered worthy of admittance.

What do we find in that subterranean world, into which descend, according to the poets of Greece and Italy, those shadowy remains of the dead, which they call *manes*. In the first place we behold inhospitable shores, where those children

\* Psalms, xxxv. 9, 10.

† 2nd Epistle of St. Peter, i. 4.

‡ Romans, viii. 17.

who had died before they had tasted life, and those crowds of vulgar souls, whose lives presented nothing sufficiently remarkable to attract the attention of the gods, wandered and bewailed themselves. On one side was the black *Tartarus*, with its prisons and places of torture, which bore a strong resemblance to those infected underground cells where slaves were confined by their masters, and those amphitheatres where gladiators tore one another in pieces.

A little farther on were the Elysian fields, where sages, heroes, princes and their favourites, and whoever had performed great things during life, enjoyed supreme happiness ; which happiness, nevertheless, was very inferior to that of the gods, who resided far away on Olympus, and was in truth so very unsatisfactory, that the poets had the good sense to cause the river Lethe to flow in the neighbourhood, and to bestow upon its waters the property of taking from those who drank them all recollection of the past.

In one word, the ideas of the pagans concerning futurity were well calculated to fill the soul of man with passionate love for the things of this world. Olympus, the Elysian fields, and the earth echoed each other's cry of "Woe to the lowly and the weak !"

But the heaven of Christianity is open to all, and in particular to those who submit here below with resignation, if not with love, to the trials of poverty, abjection, contempt, and a life passed in labour and obscurity. There, *the last shall be first, and the first last*. Jesus Christ foreshows to us the poor as *our introducers into the everlasting dwellings*, and as our best advocates at that dread tribunal, where the most eloquent lips will be silent. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are those who suffer persecution, etc., for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, with all its joys and treasures ! Charity—the love of God above all things, and of all men as ourselves, is the *wedding garment*, in which alone we can appear at the *Marriage Feast of the Lamb*, that great festival, the delights of which will last as long as God is God. Whoever is not clothed therewith, will be cast into the exterior darkness, *where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth !\**

Hell, terrible hell, threatens us all, more especially those to whom Divine Wisdom has said : *Give ear, you that rule the people, and that please yourselves in multitudes of nations . . . . A most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule ; for to him that is*

\* Matthew xxiii. 12, 13.

*little, mercy is granted ; but the mighty shall be mightily tormented. For God will not except any man's person, neither will he stand in awe of any man's greatness ; for he made the little and the great, and he hath equally care of all.\** And to be buried for ever in that fire which shall never be extinguished, it is by no means necessary, as might be inferred from fables, to have stolen fire from heaven, or attempted the abduction of a goddess (like Prometheus or Theseus) ; it is sufficient, so Jesus Christ tells us, to have lived like the rich glutton, in the enjoyment of every luxury, regardless of the distressed.†

Such were the convictions which had to be implanted in the soul of man, in order to bring about the following extraordinary revolution : In the place of a barbarian, who worshipped himself and sacrificed the labour and blood of his fellow-creatures before the shrine of his passions, Christianity has substituted a civilized and a civilizing being, who, adoring God alone, and *bringing his body under subjection*, devotes to purposes of charity what he denies to his own appetites, and regards the gifts of nature and fortune only as means of promoting the glory of God, and the good of his brethren.

Believe me, without this firm and unchangeable faith in the adoption of all mankind by Jesus Christ, and conviction of the emptiness of the things of this world whether good or evil, compared with those of eternity, man never will rise above the egotistical worship of self, but will always remain what Plautus has defined him : *A wolf in his commerce with his fellow-creatures ;*‡ and the civilization of such a man is but refined barbarism.

*Ques.*—There is no doubt that faith in futurity, as preached to us by the Gospel, is one of the most powerful levers of civilization, but if it alone was made use of, would it not engender that coldness and indifference for temporal interests with which men tax, and not quite without reason, those countries where faith is too lively ?

*Ans.*—I will not ask you to say what are the levers you allude to, not deducible from Christian principles, which could, in your opinion, raise men above the adoration of self. I will examine elsewhere the reproach cast upon those nations whose faith is too strong. For the present I will merely lay before you this historical fact : *It is to those generations, which were most distinguished for their faith in the future state of which Christianity speaks, and for their contempt of this life, that the world is indebted for the*

\* Wisdom vi. 3, 8.

† Luke xvi. 19, 31.

‡ *Lupus est homini homo, non homo*—In *Asin.*

most heroic labours—labours which stand quite alone, and are an honour and consolation to every part of the human family.

Such will be the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

*By what prodigy Jesus Christ has banished Barbarism from all Social Institutions, and raised to honour all that it trampled under foot.*

*Ques.*—What is the prodigy you allude to?

*Ans.*—I allude to the choice made by Jesus Christ of those who styled themselves *the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all,\** to be his instruments in purging the world of all uncleanness, and in founding an entirely new state of society.

It had always been believed that, for a man to be able to perform great things, he must be great himself, either by birth, riches, or knowledge. Whoever lacked these advantages, was ranked among that *secondary species of men* of whom the great Aristotle said: “There is little difference between the services rendered to man by animals and by slaves. Nature itself requires that *slavery* should exist, since it *has made the bodies of free men different from those of slaves*, and bestowed upon the latter the strength proper for their position, *and upon the former a tall and upright figure.*”† Even in countries where the lower orders were free, as among the Jews, they were not believed to possess any talent. *Is he not the son of a carpenter*, and also, *is he not from Nazareth?* was said of Jesus by those who laughed at his mission.‡

Now this prejudice, which was an obstacle to any social or moral reformation, because it fostered pride in the upper, and a spirit of meanness and servility in the lower classes, was destroyed and annihilated for ever by the example of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Born and brought up in an obscure station of life himself, it was from an undistinguished provincial town of a very small kingdom, that he elected the founders of an empire, before which the empires of the Persians, of Alexander the Great, and of the Romans are but as child's play.

\* 1st Cor. iv. 13.

† See his books on *Policy*. The words in italics are sufficient to prove how slavery among the Greeks had changed even the nature of its victims.

‡ Math. xiii. 55; John i. 46.

It was the will of Jesus Christ that those souls, which, though simple and sincere, were yet so devoid of talent, that after three years had been consecrated to their instruction by the most accomplished of masters, they still misunderstood his plainest lessons, should become *the light of the world, and the salt of the earth*. It was his will that those hearts which, upon the first trial, evinced their weakness by apostacy and desertion, should display unheard of strength, courage, and heroism. It was his will that their works should be greater even than his own.

It is a fact worthy of eternal admiration, that in the very place where he permitted the pride of the Pharisees and the covetousness of his disciple to prevail against him, and Peter to deny him, Jesus Christ ordained that the same Peter, transformed into a model of humility and detachment, should perform wonders surpassing even those of his Divine Master. In fact, where three years' laborious preaching had only collected around Jesus Christ a little flock which was dispersed by the first storm, Peter with two sermons converted eight thousand souls, ready to stand the test of martyrdom. Only one sick woman was cured by touching the hem of the garment of Jesus Christ, whereas Peter's mere shadow cured multitudes of sick who were placed in his way.\*

We perceive in all this an evident design to bring about a change in the opinion of men as to the real source of moral strength and true greatness, which design the Apostle of nations has expressed so energetically: *The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong. And the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his sight . . . . That, as it is written, He that glorieth, may glory in the Lord.*†

Is it not apparent that the execution of this design was a means eminently calculated for reducing all men to the level of universal brotherhood beneath the noble yoke of the dominion of God?

*Ques.*—Yes; to confide to poor ignorant men the mission of dethroning Jupiter, Apollo, Mars and Venus, and of forcing the gods and demi-gods of the earth to fall, together with their slaves, prostrate at the foot of the cross, was indeed to bring about a most astonishing revolution.

\* St. John xiv. 12.

† 1st Cor. i. 29—31.

*Ans.*—Add that this astonishing revolution has been now for many ages an accomplished fact among the most enlightened nations of the universe.

Here, faith is not required to make a man acknowledge this greatest of miracles. Whether, with the whole Catholic world, we venerate the Apostles as *the plenipotentiaries of Eternal Wisdom*, and as *the living Temples of the Holy Ghost*, whether, with the more polite sort of Rationalists, we regard them as the enthusiastic disciples of a great man, or whether, with Voltaire, we carry the fury and madness of impiety so far as to call them "*the unprincipled twelve*;" their colossal work really exists before our eyes, diffusing all over the world an inexhaustible stream of life and light; and it has stood so long, and has produced results so marvellous, as to scorn comparison with any of the master-pieces of human wisdom and power.

What, I ask, are all the literary productions of the deepest philosophers, from Pythagoras down to Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, in comparison with the little book of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and their Epistles, or in comparison with the Catholic Catechism, which is but an abridgment of the Testament? The writings of the philosophers are a darksome labyrinth of contradictions explored by only a few, and these come out filled with contempt and *a feeling of uncertainty about everything*.\* Point out to me, among the many nations which the philosophers have demoralised and perverted by their scepticism, one single village founded or governed by them with tolerable success. Whereas half the world has been now for many ages directing its progress by the bright light of Apostolical teaching.

Where, now, are the most famous codes of ancient wisdom? They are to be found but in the memory of a few learned men, who cannot restrain a smile when they compare these wretched emanations of the human mind with the magnificent foundations upon which the social institutions of Christianity rest, thanks to the fishermen of Nazareth.

Compare all the empires of the world, whether large or small, with the Empire of Peter, that Empire which extends over the past and the present, and has beheld the rise and fall of all other Empires.

*The names and exploits of the greatest heroes are now but a College theme*, according to the expression of Napoleon. But the names and great actions of the Apostles still cause the

\* See, farther back, *the Preliminary Ques.*—ques. 1st.

hearts of three hundred millions of men to throb with respect and love, and the incense of prayer is incessantly wafted up to these immortal Regenerators of mankind. Great is the joy of the archæologist when he succeeds in discovering any remains (which daily become more and more rare), of some great monument of antiquity. But who can count the monuments of all kinds that are daily being raised or carefully preserved in memory of the Apostles and of their children in the faith?

Even humanly speaking, no glory has equalled, or ever will equal, that of those poor fishermen who rejoiced in being *the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all!* Nor have all the Cræsus and Cæsars of the world caused the circulation of such riches, moved such a weight of stone, or given employment to so many chisels, brushes, and pens, as have the *poor in spirit* who said: *Silver and gold we have none!* Now, when goats browse the brambles growing on the golden palaces of Cæsar and Lucullus, Rome still beholds pilgrims from all nations beneath the sun, bearing their tribute of veneration to the tomb of the Apostles. Do you not think that Jesus has well fulfilled his apparently strange promise of giving them in this life *a hundred fold* for all they had left in order to procure his greater glory, and the salvation of their brethren."\*

*Ques.*—Yes, truly; and I even think the fulfilment exceeds the promise; millions of temples, altars, and pulpits, in the place of those wretched boats and cottages which they left for Christ; millions of Christians saluting them from age to age as the *fathers of their souls*, instead of those sons to whom they would have bequeathed their nets, and those grandsons who would have forgotten them; that, I think, is somewhat more than a hundred fold.

*Ans.*—Nevertheless, we must own that the oblation of gratitude and admiration which we can render must ever be utterly disproportioned to the benefit we have received, and that the glory of Heaven alone can repay the debt mankind owes to its deliverers. What, in fact, are all the exploits of the gods, demigods, and heroes, whose deeds were celebrated by the heathen poets; what are all the intellectual, artistic, and military labours so boasted of in the History of the Greeks and Romans, compared to the labours of those Christian worthies who delivered men from senseless prejudices and the most fearful immorality, who bestowed moral and political life upon nineteen twentieths of the human race, and transformed into abodes of charity served

\* Matthew xix. 29.

by Christian virgins the amphitheatre and the circus, where the highest orders of society went to taste the delights of homicide and the infamy of prostitution?

But what I desire you above all to remark is the rank of the assailants in this stupendous war. Whence came those legions of martyrs whose lips breathed such words of truth and reason, and whose hearts were so dauntless? From every rank of society, but chiefly from the lower classes, that is to say, from the crowd of slaves. Many slaves converted their masters, becoming thus their masters in faith. By the side of an Agatha, an Agnes, or a Felicitas, who were reproached by their persecutors with disgracing their noble birth by the profession of a *servile religion*, there stood the slaves Blandina, Potamiana, etc., who confounded the Roman magistrates by the force and dignity of their answers, and reduced them to the necessity of confining their speech to the brutal words: "*Adore the gods of the Empire, and the sacred images of the Emperors, or die, like your Christ!*" What must have been the ultimate effect, I ask, of the unceasing spectacle of this intellectual war in which slaves of either sex displayed a superhuman degree of knowledge and courage?

*Ques.*—It must have been, I think, a magnificent protest against the ancient proverb which declared that a slave was a *mere cypher, a body without a soul, differing but little from an animal.*

*Ans.*—Yes; if you desire to read *the true history of European civilization*, you must have recourse to that of the five first ages of the Church. You will there meet with a full account of that fact, of which I here give you an abridgment. The Patricians of Rome, who, by the devastation of the whole world, formed, according to the expression of Tacitus, complete *nations* of themselves, no sooner became Christians, than they acknowledged as children and brethren those innumerable bands of slaves, whom they had previously regarded as devoted, soul and body, to serve the interests and vices of their masters. These children of servitude, being morally enfranchised, prepared to receive their civil enfranchisement by the holiness of their lives. How many of the heirs and heiresses of the great names and fortunes of the Empire, after having divided their possessions among the members of their immense families, went to the Church, followed by eight thousand slaves, as, for instance, Pinius, his wife Melania, and his mother-in-law Albina, to say to the bishop: "In the Name of that God who became a slave in order to set us free, receive this act of the enfranchisement of these good servants, who have by their virtues become our masters; and



deign to give us in exchange the badge of the poorest and most humble servants of Jesus Christ!"

Thus was the most dangerous wound of the ancient world cicatrized by the fire of Christian charity.

When hordes of barbarians, establishing themselves upon the ruins of the Roman Empire, had once more divided the family of the human race into *most high Lords and men of nothingness*, by what means did the successors of the Apostles undermine this work of the pride and covetousness of the conquerors? They renewed the marvels of the first ages of Christianity by inducing, not merely a few noblemen, but kings and princes to descend in numbers from their thrones, in order to place themselves under the government of their own serfs in the humility and poverty of the cloister! To *that folly of the great, to that madness of the fearful ambition of priests and monks*, to use the language of our free thinkers, was it owing that Christian civilization emerged triumphant from the chaos of the middle ages!

If civilization is at present in great danger, by reason of the licence given to pride, covetousness, and sensuality, which passions pertain essentially to barbarism, you must already understand, and will understand still better, the farther we advance in these studies, that the only antidote against barbarism is practical faith in the law of Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER V.

*A final observation on the distinguishing feature between the doctrine and life of Jesus Christ and all other doctrines and lives.*

*Ques.*—What is this distinguishing feature of the doctrine and life of Christ?

*Ans.*—Their *universality*.

No man, before Jesus Christ, ever dreamed of teaching all nations. With the exception of Moses, no philosopher or legislator ever thought it even possible to instruct one entire kingdom. The schools of the Sages of antiquity were open only to a small number of disciples. The sacerdotal castes of Egypt, Persia, and India, held the science of all things, divine and human, as a mystery not to be penetrated by the vulgar. All religious and political legislators have ever confined their views to the education and aggrandizement of a single race, and

bestowed more or less despotic power upon one privileged class. Man, in a national, that is, in a civil and political point of view, has ever been the object of their attention; and in their scheme, religion has ever been the means only, and not the end. And in fact, all among them who have had ambitious views, such as Numa and Mahomet, have merely formed bands of destroyers, who said to all other nations: "Become Romans, Arabs, Turks, or die!"

"Go," said Jesus Christ to his Apostles, "*teach all nations*, re-convert them to unity of thought and practice in matters of religion; cause them to be of *one heart and one soul*, but let them retain in their customs, and in their civil and political institutions, all that is not incompatible with my law."

In fact, that jealous law which reigns with undivided sway over the conscience, permitting there neither thought nor desire contrary to its injunctions, and which insinuates itself into the smallest details of a man's private and public life, for the purpose of ruling them, yet leaves him at liberty to act as he pleases in his political career.

Inflexible on every point that regards religious unity, *i.e.*, that regards submission to those articles of faith and morality which it considers essential to the moral perfection of man, this law attempts not to reduce the *outward man* to an entire state of uniformity—for such an attempt, whether made upon individuals or upon whole nations, would tend completely to destroy the distinctive peculiarities of their character. This is the reason why the Gospel is the only religious law which has brought men to unite together in mutual belief, without becoming either enslaved or blended into one nation.

Must not this characteristic of the Law of the Gospel be a mark of its superhuman origin?

*Ques.*—Certainly, there is some reason to suspect that this Law must be the work not of a Jew, a Greek, or a Roman, not of a European, or an Asiatic, but of the common Father of all mankind.

*Ans.*—With a little reflection, your suspicions will be changed into certainty. I proceed to a second consideration.

The personal life of Jesus Christ may with equal reason be called *universal*. From the stable of Bethlehem to Mount Calvary, his life comprises the whole of human life, with all its strange contrasts and sudden changes.

His birth presents a scene of the greatest poverty and of the greatest majesty: we behold a cradle, or rather a manger, in which a babe receives reverence, adoration, gifts, from above and

from below, from the near and from the distant—a manger against which long storms of impotent fury break.

A few years later, and what do we behold? The obscure child of an obscure carpenter, standing in the midst of the doctors, astonishing them by his questions and by his answers, and then returning to the lowly workshop, where he remains in the practice of obedience and labour, until he has attained his thirtieth year.

In his public life we behold at once the life of the great High Priest, and that of the humblest of God's ministers; the life of a prince high and mighty, the observed of all observers, and that of a mendicant, who has not where to lay his head. He feeds multitudes, and leaves his disciples to appease their hunger with half-ripe ears of corn. We behold him seated at the table of the rich, giving them severe lessons; and we behold him seated by the well of Jacob, asking a Samaritan woman to give him a drink of water, and imparting to her the word of life.

He whose pure morality causes even his own disciples to shudder, receives sinners and the outcasts of society with the most strange tenderness, defends them against those who blame them, asserts that *there shall be joy before the Angels of God* at their conversion, and addresses them only in these consoling words: *Go, and now sin no more.*

Finally, during the last three days of this marvellous career, we behold the triumphant entry of a hero going to receive a crown amid the acclamations of enthusiastic multitudes, and the fearful agony of a condemned man, who undergoes every imaginable pain of soul and body, and is led forth to execution amid the hootings of a mob thirsting for his blood.

In short, there is not a person in the world who, on studying this life, cannot daily find occasion to say to himself—"Thus did Jesus Christ speak and act under similar circumstances."

If you wish to have some idea of the various lessons which may be drawn by superior minds from the life of the God-Man, according to the various kinds of audience whom they may be addressing, listen to a few sentences taken from the writings of two deep thinkers, one of the fifth century, the other of the nineteenth.

St. Augustin, in a catechism intended for the poor peasants of his diocese, reasoned as follows on the life of Christ. After an historical sketch of all that God had done from the beginning to prepare all things for the coming of his Son, and for the conversion of mankind from the life of the flesh to that of the Spirit, he continues in the following terms: "In becoming man,

our Lord Jesus Christ despised all earthly riches to make us despise them, and embraced all earthly sorrows to teach us how to bear them, thus proving that true happiness does not consist in the former, nor misery in the latter. By choosing for his mother one who, though ever a Virgin (a Virgin in conceiving a Son, a Virgin in childbirth, a Virgin until death), was yet espoused to a poor artizan, he stifled the foolish pride of worldly rank. By being born in Bethlehem, the smallest town of Judea, and which at present is but a village, he prevented any man from taking pride in his birth-place. He who was the Creator and Lord of all things would be poor, in order that none of his followers might take pride in riches. Although all creatures acknowledge him as their eternal Sovereign, he would not be made king by men, because he came to show the road of humility to those miserable sinners who had rebelled against him through pride. He, who feeds every living creature, suffered hunger and thirst; he, who threw open to us the road to Heaven, endured fatigue on the roads of Judea; he, whose word made the dumb speak, and the deaf hear, remained silent before his calumniators, and as though he heard not; he, who broke the chains of sin, was bound with cords; he, who freed us from the scourges due to our sins, was scourged in Pilate's hall; he, who saved us from eternal torments, was crucified; and finally, he, who raised the dead to life, died upon a cross. But he rose again, to die no more, in order to teach all men to despise death by faith in eternal life.\* Now, after this lesson from the instructions given by the Eagle of Hippo to the commonest minds, read the following brief quotation from the magnificent reflections addressed by M. de Bonald, fifty years ago, to the deepest thinkers of Europe, in his *Theology of civil and religious power*:

"All other legislators have given precepts, Jesus Christ gives *examples*. I hear Numa, Solon, and Lycurgus; I see Jesus Christ. I see him in every position and every situation of public life in which a man can be placed on earth, as the model of every station and every rank. I see him in friendly and in political society; in private and in public life; at rest, and traversing the countries of Judea; in intercourse with men, and in communication with God; in exterior occupations, and in recollection and prayer. In his own family, I behold him as a son, a father, and a friend; in the political world, he is a subject, and yet exercises authority; in the religious world, he is supreme, and at the same time a subject. He partakes of the sumptuous

\* *De catechisandis rudibus*, cap. 22.

repasts of the rich, and endures privations with the poor; he has disciples who listen to his words, and detractors who calumniate him; he teaches the Doctors of the law, and is interrogated by the Judges; the people desire to make him king, and his enemies put him to death. He is not the representative of *a man*, for no one man can be placed in every rank, and pass through every condition; he is the representative of mankind at large, and that is one of the characteristics of the Saviour of all. To his parents he is a respectful son, but he prefers the duty of being useful to mankind to that of being useful to his Mother. He pays tribute to Cæsar, but he reconciles what is due to God with what is due to the prince; what is due to religious, with what is due to political authority. His doctrine and his miracles prove his power; but he is powerful only to do good; *transiit benefaciendo.*"

The remarks, however imperfect, which I have made in these five chapters concerning *the Existence of Jesus Christ*, authorize my asking you with some confidence the following question: *Is it probable, or even possible, that Jesus Christ should be nothing more than a man?* Nevertheless, you may reserve your answer until we have examined the great Work of Jesus Christ—the Catholic Church.

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### III.—THE EXISTENCE OF A CATHOLIC CHURCH.

#### CHAPTER I.

*That the intention of God and of his Christ must have been to found a Catholic Church.*

*Ques.*—In the first place, what do you mean by a *Catholic Church*?

*Ans.*—I mean a religious society, capable, by its organisation, of including all mankind, and of bringing them to the knowledge and practice of the law of justice and charity which has been given to the world by Jesus Christ. In the supposition (which, however, is a certainty), that Jesus Christ is the Envoy of God to man, and the Regenerator of mankind, do you not clearly perceive that the establishment of such a society must have been the end, or at least the consequence of his mission?

*Ques.*—Religious unity certainly offers many advantages ; but does the Almighty insist upon it in the manner Catholics imagine? Those diversities of religious worship, which are so repugnant to our narrow ideas of order, may not be equally offensive to our Heavenly Father, *who is rich unto all who call on him,\** whatever may be the form of their prayer.

*Ans.*—If you regard all the non-Christian religions which formerly existed throughout the world, and still exist in many parts, as harmless varieties of the worship of God, I must say you cannot be acquainted with these forms of worship, and that, if you study them, you will be convinced that they are calculated to obliterate from the mind every idea of God and of morality. Not to speak of those gods and goddesses thirsting for blood and impurity, who were adored by the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the commercial Carthaginians, the Celts, Gauls, Scandinavians, etc., nor of those gods of similar description adored by the Mexicans as late as the sixteenth century, it will be sufficient for my purpose if I bring forward as examples the religions of the ancient Greeks and of the modern Hindoos, two nations the most remarkable for their mildness and the politeness of their manners. I defy you to find me among the former one single god or goddess whom the most indulgent jury would not condemn to death, or at least to perpetual imprisonment. I may, perhaps, make an exception in favour of the *chaste Diana*, who might be only sent to a house of correction. Ask all those who have studied Indian literature, in what the religion of *Lingam* and the worship of the goddess *Sacty* consist ; for I have neither time nor courage to tell you. They would likewise inform you that these Hindoos, who carry their horror of blood to such a degree as to consider it a crime to kill a tiger, a serpent, or an insect, do not hesitate to burn widows alive on their husband's funeral pile, and to implore the blessing of Heaven upon their fields by the sacrifice of a number of children fattened for that purpose.†

Finally, what is the object of the continual prayers of those good Mussulmen, who certainly are the least corrupted, the most civilized, and the most devout of any unbelievers? The Paradise of Mahomet ; that is to say, the favour of being allowed to continue for all eternity a life of sensuality founded on the degradation of one half of the human species. Do you think that such prayers can be acceptable to the Creator of woman,

\* Rom. x. 12.

† See *l'Histoire de la Société domestique*, par M. l'Abbé Gaume, and further on, the first chapter of the fourth fact.

who has made her heart the reservoir of all virtues necessary for the good education of man?

It is very well for the opulent Deist, who lives in the quiet enjoyment of all the blessings of Gospel civilization, to think that nothing need be altered in the arrangements of the vast human family, ignorant as he may be of all beyond his town and country residences. It is easy to understand that such a man may be more amused than grieved at the accounts he occasionally hears of the laws and customs of barbarous nations; and that he may admire in them the wisdom of nature, which diversifies the human species in the same manner as it does the monkey tribe. Can God and mankind have any reason to complain, whilst our honest philosopher has a comfortable bed to rest on after the noble labours of the theatre, the table, or the daily walk? But you, who are already in some degree acquainted with the love of God for the work of his hands, and the profound wretchedness of the noblest of his creatures, do you not understand that it was of paramount importance for Jesus Christ to come and teach us not merely a more perfect form of prayer, but the *only* prayer that could please God, and save man in this world, and in the next?

*Ques.*—Of what prayer are you speaking?

*Ans.*—Of the seven short petitions of the *Our Father*. These petitions, rightly understood, contain all that is required of us by God, and all that is necessary to enable men to live together as brethren. These petitions were, and still are, unknown to infidels. By studying their forms of worship, you will perceive that they have never asked their gods to bring about their moral reformation, or to free them from those vices which close the dwelling of eternal sanctity against them, and make the world a sink of filth and blood.

Now, if nothing less than the Coming of the God-Man upon earth was enough to teach the *Pater Noster* to the world, do you not see the necessity of a religious society embracing all times and all places, for the perpetuation of the lesson?

*Ques.*—Yes, such an institution was the logical consequence, and necessary complement of the mission of Christ, and I am puzzled to understand how any believer in the divine origin of Christianity can entertain a doubt upon the subject. But a mere philosopher will scarcely be able to persuade himself that the religious unity of the world is possible, or that it even enters into the designs of God, so many are the obstacles arising from the difference of ideas and customs; while the obstinate adherence of half the universe to idolatry seems to imply that Heaven is

but little interested in realizing the views of Christ and his followers.

*Ans.*—I disclaim the art of convincing the mere philosopher, that is to say, a frivolous mind satisfied with speaking grandly upon every subject, and carefully abstaining from a conscientious study of facts, which alone can produce sincere conviction. But I could wish all, who, like yourself, are conscientiously seeking the truth, to meditate upon the two following facts.

I. The opposition which the Gospel at present receives from the ideas and customs of idolatrous nations, is certainly not greater, nay, is even much less, than in the time of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, when the new religion, *to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks a folly*, appeared in the eyes of the learned men of Rome nothing but *an abominable Eastern superstition, worthy of the hatred of mankind*. If it then triumphed over all the wisdom of the philosophers and the hatred of the masters of the world, why should it not triumph in like manner over the ignorance and weakness of the idolators of Asia and Africa, now that it has been for so many ages the religion of the proud conquerors who have compassed the globe, whose fleets traverse the seas, and who cause the dead and the living idols of Asia and Africa to tremble on altar and on throne?

And then, has not the Catholic Church long ago overcome the so-called invincible opposition made by the diversity of manners and customs of the various nations of the universe? As we shall soon see, she always has had, and still has disciples more or less numerous in every nation under Heaven; whence we may, I think, conclude that insurmountable obstacles to the light of the Gospel do not exist in any country.

II. You will ask, how is it, then, that Asia, the largest and most populous of the Continents of the Old World, is still filled with idolaters, and that Africa, a large portion of which was formerly Christian, should once more have fallen beneath the yoke of barbarism? Does it not seem as though Heaven had grown cold in our regard? Decidedly not! Is not the fact that Catholicism maintains its ground in the most influential portion of the globe, and raises its standard aloft in a hundred different nations, notwithstanding the incessant fire of persecution, sufficient proof of the constancy of the Almighty in his merciful scheme for the Evangelization of the whole world? But God has made the conversion of infidels dependent upon two conditions: 1st, that they be won to the faith by the word and example of Christians; 2ndly, that they have the desire to be instructed in the faith, and the courage to practise and confess it.



It being, as is well known, the will of Jesus Christ that men should be his agents in the conversion of their fellow men, it was necessary that the spiritual conquerors of the universe, whilst bearing the *good tidings* to all nations, should make it their first object to convert some one region, which might be, as it were, their fortified camp, the centre of all their movements, and the focus of Apostolic light. He, the object of whose coming was that *the last should be first*, singled out for this purpose the family of Japhet, the youngest son of Noe. Hence those surprising and persevering efforts thoroughly to Christianise Europe, and to transform the capital city of the ancient plunderers and murderers of bodies into the head-quarters of the Divine Lover and Saviour of souls.

Nor yet were the children of Sem and Cham forgotten. When we become better acquainted with the history of Asia (particularly of the North and East), since the Christian Era, it will probably be proved that the Prophet of Mecca has not been the sole, nor even the greatest destroyer of Asiatic Christianity, and that the present condition of the East is the deserved punishment of some great Apostacy.

*Ques.*—But even if that fact were proved, would it follow that the present generations of idolaters are guilty of the apostacy of their ancestors?

*Ans.*—No; but it would follow that the fact of these poor idolaters being deprived of the light of the Gospel, must be imputed not to any indifference on the part of God, but to the perverseness of their ancestors, and likewise to our own. Nothing can be more unreasonable than the judgments we pass upon the government of Divine Providence. Does the Almighty single out one nation in particular, such as the Jewish people, to be his instruments in the work of universal Redemption, and does he strive to attach them to himself by rendering their history one series of prodigies; we immediately say that he does too much, and that he reduces men to the condition of slaves. Does he, on the other hand, while yet affording sufficient light, suffer other nations to abuse their liberty to such a degree as to reduce society to a state worthy of Hell; we then upbraid the God of Sinai for his partiality, and say: "Jehovah is not the common Father of nations."

I beg you to reflect upon the two following principles, which may assist you to solve the formidable problem of general predestination—a problem which has only been rendered more obscure by certain bright luminaries of theology.

I. By the very fact of bestowing upon us free will, the Al-

mighty undertakes to save us, only inasmuch as we desire it ourselves, except when it is his will to take us out of life before the age of reason. That fact is, I think, understood by all. What follows is less universally understood.

II. By making us social beings, who physically and morally are to receive life through the instrumentality of other men, Almighty God has engaged himself to make use chiefly of the heads of society, whether domestic, civil, or religious, to impart to each one of us the truths that enlighten our minds, and the virtues that purify and exalt our hearts.

Therefore, when, in a nation which has been or is on the point of being converted to Christianity, social influences make a determined opposition to the light of the Gospel, the natural and necessary consequence is that this light will first grow dim, and then be wholly extinguished, unless it pleases the Almighty to renew in that nation those prodigies of heroism by which the Christians of the three first ages triumphed over all the cruelty of the masters of the universe. Now, I ask you, would God be obliged to renew over and over again those wonders, without which, in the first instance, the law of Jesus Christ could never have been implanted in the hearts of men?

*Ques.*—I certainly do not think so: the conduct of the first Christians, their ardour for martyrdom, an ardour which infected even young children, the victories gained by those lambs over the wolves that devoured them, were evidently a deviation from the laws of our moral nature; such events, therefore, are exceptions, and if too often repeated, would do away with the natural laws of moral order, of which laws God himself is the author.

*Ans.*—Yes; miracles, that is to say direct and extraordinary interventions of God in human affairs, are intended to assist our helplessness, not to encourage our indolence.

When all men, with few exceptions, were immersed in error and corruption, it was necessary, for their moral resurrection, that eternal truth and wisdom should be made man, and create men who should be *the light of the world*, and *the salt of the earth*. When these men, by their labours, had formed Christian nations, Christianity, thus *naturalised* in the world, was henceforth to support and propagate itself by making use of both its divine and its human powers. To Europe was it said, in the same manner as to the chief of those men who conquered it in Christ: *Thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.\** Has Europe

\* Luke xxii. 32.

been endowed with powers sufficient to enable it to fulfil its Divine mission, and complete its own civilization by civilizing the universe? It has, as we shall see elsewhere. Let us now bestow our attention upon the realisation of the Divine plan of a Catholic Church.

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## CHAPTER II.

*That a Catholic Christian Church has existed during the last eighteen hundred and twenty-nine years.*

*Ques.*—Eighteen hundred and twenty-nine years, subtracted from eighteen hundred and sixty-one, take us back to the year 32 of the vulgar Era; now I cannot imagine how you can possibly prove that a Catholic Church existed at that epoch.

*Ans.*—The Christian Church was *Catholic* from the beginning. On the very day of her birth she spoke all languages; and believers out of every nation under heaven entered her fold, pointing her out to us as the Spouse of Christ, empowered to bring forth the nations of the world unto life eternal, that life which was defined by our Saviour in his prayer to his heavenly Father, in the following terms: *Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.\**

Let us give ear to the ocular historian of the birth of the Church: *And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, it being the fiftieth day from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the tenth from his Ascension, there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven . . . Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians . . . Peter having opened his mouth and preached faith in the Son of God crucified, they that received his word were baptized, and there were added in that day about three thousand souls. And after a second sermon, preached soon after the first, the number of the men that believed was made five thousand . . . And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul: neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them.†*

\* John xvii. 3.

† Acts of the Apostles ii. 4.

A few years later, the Prince of the Apostles took up his pen, and dated his first letter from *the Church which is in Babylon*, that is to say in that immense sink of error and wickedness which the Shepherd of shepherds was to purify and transform into the capital city of the empire of Christian truth and holiness. And to whom was the letter addressed? To the Christians of *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*.

We next may behold *the Apostle of the Gentiles* rendering homage to the astonishing success of Peter; for, writing from Corinth to the Christians of Rome, who were as yet known to him only by repute, he tells them *that their faith is spoken of in the whole world*.\*

And if you suspect any exaggeration in this praise of the Christians of Rome, open the fifteenth Book of the Annals of the Pagan Tacitus, and you will there find that *the numbers of the followers of Christ were enormous* at the time when Nero took it into his head to accuse them of the burning of Rome.

Read the *Acts of the Apostles*, and although after the ninth chapter the labours of St. Paul form their principal, if not their only subject, you will find that the Gospel was being preached in almost every portion of the world, and with so much success, that in the nineteenth chapter it is recorded that the silversmith Demetrius, *who made silver temples for Diana*, said to the workmen of like occupation: *You know that our gain is by this trade, and you see and hear that this Paul hath drawn away a great multitude, not only of Ephesus, but also of all Asia, saying: They are not gods which are made by hands. So that not only is this our craft in danger to be set at nought, but also the temple of the great Diana shall be reputed for nothing, yea, and her Majesty shall begin to be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth*.†

Can you now deny the existence, even before the middle of the first century of our Era, of a Catholic Church, that is to say, of a Church preaching Jesus Christ to all nations, and having devoted followers among all people?

*Ques.*—To speak the exact truth, I should be rather inclined to answer that it all appears to me very like a dream, only I know you would tell me that *the dream* has lasted a long while.

*Ans.*—Yes; and I think I have already told you in the *Preliminary Questions*, that unbelievers, by speaking of Christianity as a dream of the human mind, give us a right to answer: Allowing the Catholic world to have been dreaming ever since the time of Christ, we must quite despair of its ever awaking; and

\* Romans i. 8.

† Acts xix. 24—27.

if you expect to recall it to reason, you only give proof of very senseless pride.

And then, may I ask, in whose head did such a dream first commence? Among the many bold thinkers whom the world has produced, you will not find one who has ever dared to dream of an *Universal Society*, and that of the most difficult species of society—the society of hearts and souls.

Do you bring forward the Romans? Name then the Roman who from the beginning formed the scheme, I do not say of universal empire, but of such an empire as existed when the Apostles began to found theirs. Shall it be Romulus, the number of whose followers scarcely amounted to three thousand foot soldiers and three hundred horse at the time when he was *taken away by the gods*? There is every reason to believe that the Romans never formed any idea of what their empire would be until it actually had attained the highest pitch of grandeur, and how long that took you know.

In the case of the Galilean fishermen, the design preceded the fulfilment; and a scheme far superior to any ever formed by the mind of man, was fulfilled so rapidly, and by means so disproportioned to the results, that our weak reason is quite overpowered. A conscientious mind, after seeking in vain to account for the success of an enterprise which is styled by the adventurers themselves *a folly*, is obliged to accept the explanation given by St. Paul in his Epistles, particularly in the first to the Christians of Corinth. Being well acquainted with their partiality for Grecian philosophy, in which they had placed their glory and delight, he took pains to show them, in all the events that had happened, the accomplishment of those words of the Lord spoken by the Prophet Isaiah: *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of our preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.\**

Meditate for a few moments on this point. At a period when infidelity was general among the higher classes, and among be-

\* 1st Corinthians i. 19—24.

lievers religious dissension was at its height ; at a period when the Jews themselves were divided into different sects, and when not only every nation, but every city, village, and house of the Gentiles had its own separate divinities, the idea of recalling all men to unity of thought and feeling in matters of religion, and that too in the name of a crucified Jew, could not present itself to the human mind without being immediately rejected as the most egregious folly.

With a little reflection you will see, that the idea of making all men of *one heart and one soul*, could have been conceived and put in execution by none but him who had the right to say : *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible . . . . All power is given to me in heaven and on earth : Go therefore ! . . . .* \* If the mere idea of such a scheme is superhuman, what must be its fulfilment ?

*Ques.*—I feel all the force of these considerations ; but is it not true that the prodigy of religious union did not remain intact even for a single day, and that Simon the *Magician* attempted to set up a Church in the Church, under the very eyes of Simon Peter ?

*Ans.*—Yes ; but you know that he was expelled from the Church, which said to him by the mouth of its head : *Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.* † We see by the writings of the Apostles, that the conduct of Simon met with many imitators, that there were numbers of *Anti-Christ*s, and that the beloved Apostle John, before he died at the end of the first century, beheld heresy undermining the very foundations of the faith, and was obliged to take up his pen in defence of the Divinity and humanity of our Saviour.

By anathematizing those *seducers* and *Anti-Christ*s, and ordering the faithful to avoid them, and *not receive them into the house, nor say to them, God speed you*, the Apostles recalled to the minds of the Christians these words of their Divine Master : *I came not to bring peace, but the sword . . . . I send you as lambs among wolves . . . . It must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to that man by whom scandal cometh ! . . . . For there must be also heresies*, writes St. Paul to the Corinthians, ‡ that they also who are reprov'd, may be made manifest among you.

In fact, if heresies and schisms are things infinitely to be de-

\* Matthew xix. 26 ; xxviii. 18, 19. † Acts viii. 20, 21.  
1st Corinthians xi. 19.

plored on account of the number of souls which are kept by them in real ignorance of the great Fountain of Life, they yet have the advantage—1st, of purifying the Church of the evil disposed, as well as of the disorder and abuses which are occasioned by long peace; 2nd, of uniting the faithful more closely together; 3rd, of displaying this unity more clearly than ever before the eyes of all men, by the contrast it presents to the eternal divisions and sub-divisions of heresy.

Whatever may have been the number of sects during the first ages (and it was very great), it never gave rise to any doubts about the existence of a Catholic Church—I do not say merely on the minds of the faithful and of sectarians, but even on those of the pagans themselves. Celsus, in his books against the Christians, reproached them with their internal divisions, but at the same time was perfectly aware which of the contending parties were *rejected by the Great Church*. \* When the Emperor Aurelian was desirous of putting an end to the disturbances which the heretical Bishop, Paul of Samosata, was exciting in Antioch, he hesitated not in adjudging the *house of the Church to those who, being in communion with the Bishops of Italy, received letters from the Bishop of Rome*. † Ammianus Marcellinus, pagan as he was, blamed the Emperor Constans for having sought to overthrow *the Christian Religion*, the dogmas and constitution of which were so *clear and well defined*, through his desire of *having Athanasius condemned by that authority which the Bishop of Rome possessed over all other bishops*. (See Book xv. and xxi.)

I conclude in the words of two eminent Catholic writers, one of whom lived about the year 400 of the Christian Era, and the other in 1816.

St. Augustin, in a book addressed to the Manicheans, his ancient co-religionists, thus concludes his statement of the motives which attached him to the *great Church*. “Finally,” he says, “it is the name of *Catholic* which retains me within the pale of this Church; a name so peculiarly hers, that if a stranger inquires where the *Catholics* assemble, no heretic will dare to point out his own temple or house.” ‡

“A great and magnificent city of Europe,” says M. de Maistre, “will serve to exemplify what I am about to propose to all thinking minds. Churches of every Christian communion are there crowded within a very narrow space. We may behold

\* See Origen, against Celsus, Book v.

† See Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, Book vii. ch. 30; Theodoret, *Fables of the Heretics*, Book ii. ch. 8.

‡ *Contra Epist. fundam.*, iv.

a Catholic Church, a Russian Church, an Armenian Church, a Calvinist Church, a Lutheran Church, and a little further on an Anglican Church: none are wanting, save perhaps a Greek Church. Ask the first man you meet to show you *the orthodox Church*. Every Christian will show you his own, which affords a strong proof that *orthodoxy* is common to all. But if you say: *Show me the Catholic Church*, every man will point to the same. . . . . It is a very remarkable fact, that whilst every Christian is obliged to confess in the Creed, that he believes in *the Holy Catholic Church*, no heretical Church has ever dared to usurp that title, and call itself *Catholic*, although nothing could be easier than to say: *We are the Catholic Church*; and it is plain than Catholicity implies truth.\*

*Ques.*—Not to be quite dumb before *the marvellous dream*, which has lasted in historical reality for eighteen hundred years, I will say, with our dearly beloved brethren of the Biblical Churches, to whom the reality of the dream causes more anxiety than to me, that Catholic unity is all a pretence, and that there is no less opposition between the Molinists and Jansenists, between the Ultramontane and Gallican Churches, than between the various sects into which Protestantism is split.

*Ans.*—Since you are in the humour to joke, why not go still farther, and say: "Men have spoken much on the subject of Protestant anarchy, whereas they ought to have spoken on that of Protestant unity. *The striking agreement that exists between the creeds of the different Protestant Churches*, an agreement which is at once the effect and the proof of real liberty, *this agreement*, I say, is *true unity of which Catholicism possesses but the shadow*."† If you held language like that, I should at once perceive that you were joking, and there would be no danger of my looking foolish by thinking you in earnest.

I am perfectly aware that since Protestant anarchy has reached its greatest height, even in the bosom of the Anglican Church, the so-called *ministers of the Holy Gospel* have endeavoured to appease the terrors of some portions of their flocks,

\* Of late years some English Protestants have felt this so strongly, that they have endeavoured to take to themselves the title of Catholic, calling themselves *Anglo-Catholics*, *the Catholic Church in England*, &c., with, however, very indifferent success, for in all foreign countries, great confusion is caused whenever a Protestant minister styles himself a *Catholic*, no one being able to comprehend how any one, not in communion with Rome, can call himself by that name.—Tr.

† M. Vinet *Essai sur la Manifestation des Convictions Religieuses*, p. 369.



by seeking to make them believe that unity in matters of faith is to be found in Protestantism, and the reverse in Catholicism, but (thanks to the Eternal Pastor, whose will it is that all those of his straying sheep who continue docile to his voice, should return to the true fold) the undertaking was too much for the strength of these false teachers, and for the credulity of their dupes. I need only have recourse to M. Vinet himself, who was not the author, but merely the retailer of the joke, in order to show you how all the Churches founded by *the glorious Reformers* are universally and irremediably falling to pieces.

The noble writer beheld this dissolution taking place on all sides, in the Churches of the Low Countries, in the Churches of Switzerland, even in his beloved Church of Lauzanne. He had attended several of those Synods in which the mere mention of *creeds of dogmas to be professed*, excited overwhelming disapprobation. He described this dissolution in energetic language: "The beams of the roof are falling apart . . . the whole building is crumbling on all sides. . . . Its strength, both from within and without, is deserting it. All its ancient supports are broken, and remain un-replaced. . . . The instinctive feeling of self-preservation urges every one to leave the tottering edifice before it falls. . . . *Protestants there are, but Protestantism is no more.*"\* And he mourned over the weakness of his co-religionists, who could agree in nothing but in renouncing that Church, of which he said (contrary to what he had written a few pages back): "The form of Catholicism being very decided and clearly defined, must always be preserved exactly as it is received, and you may always know before hand precisely what you will find it to be. . . . *There is a something which appears to surround the Catholic religion with a wall of adamant; and that is its doctrine itself.*"†

M. Vinet wrote this in 1842. If God had granted him life, what would he have thought in these days when the Anglican Church which was surrounded by Queen Elizabeth with a wall, not of adamant, but of gold, has received so mortal a blow from the hand of the Prime Minister, who said to it with the full consent of its archbishops and all its bishops, but one: "How absurd to maintain in the nineteenth century the antiquated doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of baptismal regeneration! Be more wise, and in the face of Europe receive the Deistical Gorham as thy legitimate minister."

It is a remarkable fact that, at the very time when the

\* M. Vinet *Essai sur la Manifestation des Convictions Religieuses*, p. 495.

† Ibid, 423.

important question of faith in baptismal regeneration was being agitated among the Protestants of the West, the same question was disturbing the peace of the schismatic Churches of the East, and threatening even the shadow of unity, which they are supposed to possess. The Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem were declaring baptism by *immersion* to be essential, and consequently excluding from the kingdom of Heaven not only all the Christians of Europe and America, but likewise those of the *orthodox Russian Church*, which declares baptism by *ablution* to be perfectly valid. Who knows whether it may not please the Lord to give us a new and consoling proof of this truth : *Baptism is the gate of salvation, the sacrament which makes us children of God and of His Church?*

How do the doctrinal disagreements said to exist among Catholics contrast with this total dissolution of all human institutions? Speak not of genuine Jansenism, which has expired beneath the thunders of the Church, while its partizans, if any still exist, can only remain amongst us by deceiving us. With regard to the Thomists and Molinists, the Gallicans and Ultramontanists, even supposing they were in the present day anything more than vain phantoms and mere reminiscences of the past, what would they be? They would be children of the Holy Catholic Church amusing themselves with theological disputes in the vast field that is left open to them. But were you to lay your hand upon one of the columns of the edifice of the Catholic Church, upon one of the articles, I do not say of the Apostles' Creed, or of the Nicæan or the Athanasian Creed, but only upon one of the doctrinal definitions, which have been decreed and published either by an Acumenical Council, or by the Supreme Pontiff speaking *ex cathedra urbi et orbi*, you would instantly behold all those contending parties unite in exclaiming : "Touch not that! it is one of the boundaries erected by Jesus Christ, speaking through his Church!"

Our *terrible disagreements*, must we say to our erring brethren, are nothing more. Compare them with your own, and then see whether that famous expression which contains the whole history of all who have sought truth beyond the pale of Catholic unity, does not apply to you : "They agree but to disagree ; *their unity is schism!*" \*

\* Tertullian.

## CHAPTER III.

*That the Existence of the Catholic Church in all past ages and at the present day is not owing to any man.*

*Ques.*—What do you mean ?

*Ans.*—I mean that there are two classes of men falsely accused of being the causes of her existence : viz., I. The Catholic priesthood and its defenders ; II. The enemies of the Catholic Church. The former are accused sometimes of having invented, in a delirium of ambition, the plan of an Universal Church, sometimes of having spoiled the original scheme of the Almighty, by addition or by diminution ; and sometimes, finally, of having obstinately persisted in always maintaining it, such as we now find it. The latter are accused of having combatted the Church with cowardice and want of skill, and of having let slip a hundred opportunities of putting an end for ever to the evil dream of popes, bishops, and monks. I wish now to prove that both parties have been unjustly, nay, foolishly accused ; that they are perfectly innocent of the perpetuity of the Catholic Church ; and that if that fact is blameable the blame must fall on our blessed Lord, and on an eminent accomplice whom I will name when explaining the eighth article of the Apostles' Creed.

*Ques.*—I now understand your position, but to maintain it will surely be a work of time and difficulty. And in the first place, though you may easily prove that the popes and bishops did not *create* the Catholic Church, which was evidently founded by the Apostles, and by him who sent them, how can you possibly prove that they have not sustained this work, for I can by no means conceive an Universal Church to exist apart from the Catholic Hierarchy ?

*Ans.*—I certainly admit the perpetual concurrence of the members of the Catholic priesthood to be necessary for the existence of the Church ; but I think I can clearly prove, that this perpetual concurrence of popes, bishops, priests, monks, and all the faithful, in the preservation of Catholic unity, can never have been the work of one or of many popes, of one or of thousands of bishops, priests, kings, and emperors, as you will soon see.

You will easily admit, no doubt, that it has not been by their moral weaknesses, whether foibles or crimes, that all these agents have sustained the edifice of the Catholic Church ?

*Ques.*—Indeed I should think not ; in fact, the most astonishing thing to my mind, when I read the history of certain ages,

is, that the Church was not utterly ruined by the scandals and disorders which pervaded even the highest ranks of society. She was saved only by the great virtue and learning which even then, as her very foes confess, were to be found in the Catholic priesthood.

*Ans.*—It is this very virtue and learning of the priesthood, which I deem the greatest obstacle to Catholic unity; an obstacle so great, that without the assistance of something superior to the learning and virtue of the priests, their union constitutes a moral impossibility of the highest order. Certainly it is by no means a small undertaking to maintain harmony and union between a few individuals whose only characteristics are ignorance, indolence, and frivolity. If by chance you are not aware of this, visit an elementary school. But how difficult would it not be to establish and maintain unity of thought, feeling, and action between only a dozen men of cultivated minds, and of hearts eager for great deeds? I can think but of one means of making twelve such men agree perfectly, viz., the presence of a President who should sum up the debates, make some decision, and conclude by saying to a company of lictors: "Imprison the first of these gentlemen who dares to differ from my opinion; and if he offer any resistance, cut off his head!" If you are acquainted with any other means of securing unity, have the kindness to tell me.

*Ques.*—No doubt your method is the shortest that could be chosen, but it has the slight defect of reducing the number of thinkers from twelve to one, and making that one a real *ogre*.

It appears to me that a discussion between men of science and virtue might be productive of agreement: 1st. On first principles. 2ndly. On those conclusions which admit but of little dispute: and that with regard to the rest, good sense would say, "Liberty."

*Ans.*—Very well; and as far as I am concerned, I certainly would rather be free than either a slave or a master of slaves, were I even offered the presidentship of the twelve. But let us consider what would be the consequences of liberty.

If the twelve individuals take in hand human philosophy, I think they might possibly agree about some geometrical definitions, or about some natural phenomena thoroughly established by observation. With regard to the clearest metaphysical axioms, if all the twelve admit them one day, some of the number will have scruples upon the subject during the night; the next day these will ask for the judgment to be revised, and the result of the new discussion will be to change their scruples into serious, well-founded doubts. I would lay any wager that

far from beginning to discuss any of *those conclusions which admit of little dispute*, our twelve learned men would not get beyond the discussion of first principles, until such time as one of their number should say: "What is your opinion, my friends? Have we not clearly proved that if there are such things as *principles*, they are not for the weak mind of man?" I do not recommend you to accept my wager, for it is already won. Have I not shown you that, although the Rationalist philosophers have been at work for two thousand five hundred years, they have not yet found out what are the principles of their metaphysical and moral philosophy? \* But let us quit these philosophical speculations, to return to our subject.

What is the question? The establishment, and preservation during the course of eighteen centuries, of a school of religious philosophy, containing innumerable nations and families belonging to *all countries beneath the sun*. I will suppose the heads of this immense school to be only twelve in number, assembled, let us imagine, round a table, for the purpose of arranging by mutual agreement the programme of this philosophy. Where will they find the true principles of the philosophy of Christ?

*Ques.*—In the Bible, will it be said.

*Ans.*—Very well; but will they find anywhere in the Bible a complete formula, clearly defined and expressed, of the doctrine of Christ?

*Ques.*—I do not think so; but these twelve seekers are men of science and virtue; let them seek this formula, and by the help of God they will find it.

*Ans.*—Then I will now suppose them to be reading, meditating, and comparing the thirty thousand verses of the Bible. As they have little faith in the infallibility of translators, and are besides good Hebrew and Greek scholars, they must, in the first place, read and discuss the original text, and neglect no means of coming to a right understanding of the proper grammatical sense. These analytical labours, in order not to be illusory, would require many years of careful study before the students would be fit to begin the formation of their systems. Then each separately would lay down some fundamental truths, make one step forward, another backward, turn now to the right, now to the left, and then pause; in short, each one would write, correct, and efface. At last, the most industrious, or the most superficial, would have completed his outline of Christian philosophy, and be desirous of reading out his compositions. The reading forthwith begins. When read, these twelve compositions would in all likelihood only present a mass of contra-

\* See the preliminary questions.

dictions. At the very best they would contain twelve distinct systems of Christian philosophy alike in nothing, save their pretended origin from the Bible; and even in that case you would have reason to exclaim, "A miracle;" for by supposing such a result natural you would only prove yourself ignorant both of the Bible and of the character of learned and virtuous men.

*Ques.*—I certainly should expect they would differ widely, but the reading of the compositions ought to be followed by discussion, and if our virtuous doctors hearken not to the whisperings of self-love, they will soon see light.

*Ans.*—Yes, and I will show you what that light will be. Either our virtuous doctors will adhere to their own private opinions, founded upon the knowledge they have acquired by their study and discussions, or they will make mutual concessions.

If they decide to follow the latter plan, they may say: "We must put a stop to all this nonsense about the Bible, and extract from it one common form of religion which we can teach to all people *by the order of Christ*. If you will agree to these one or two dogmas, I will give up the rest; let every one do the same, and then we may write: *It has appeared good to the Holy Ghost and to us!*" You of course perceive that in this case, if the knowledge and *virtue of our doctors* do not meet with their reward in this world, God in the next will not neglect them, but will consign them to the special attentions of the original author of false religions. But if our virtuous sages are anxious not to make others believe what they do not themselves, I am quite sure I do not exaggerate when I say, that half or even two-thirds of the twelve religious systems will fall away when seriously discussed, and that their authors will be forced to take refuge beneath the banners of two or three leaders who may be able to assist them to save at least some remnants of their labours. The struggle will no longer be between one and many, but between various contending parties, and each discussion, far from producing unity of faith, will only tend to prove the uselessness of argumentation.

Let us suppose that at length one of these learned men has convinced all his companions by the clear and forcible manner in which he has explained his views, and that they all yield, and exclaim: "Truly that is the Word of God!" How long do you think such a conviction would last?

*Ques.*—Very possibly the same thing would happen to our Biblical philosophers as to the Rationalists; their reason, like Penelope, would undo each night all that it had produced in the day.

*Ans.*—That is clear ; their conviction could only be founded on the force of argument ; and I do not imagine that any argument could be brought forward sufficiently perfect and luminous to keep these twelve superior minds under perpetual subjection. The greater their fear of God, the greater would be their aversion to make people receive a faith, concerning which they had any doubts remaining, and in defence of which they would not be ready to say to persecutors, like millions of Catholic martyrs : “ I believe in Christ, and rather than deny or conceal my faith, I would die ! ”

Now, I ask, do you perceive how utterly incapable the Catholic priesthood (even were it a hundred times more enlightened and virtuous than it really is) would be of maintaining, *by its own unaided strength*, unity of faith and practice, I do not say for eighteen centuries, but for eighteen years ?

*Ques.*—Certainly, I do perceive great, nay, insurmountable difficulty.

*Ans.*—In a few words I will show you that it would be a moral impossibility, far greater than any other conceivable impossibility of the same kind.

In fact, the history of the Catholic Church shows us, instead of twelve members of the Catholic priesthood (such as we have supposed assembled together in Council), more than eighteen millions, who for eighteen centuries have been forming the immense net, as it were, which by the mere force of conviction keeps fifty generations of Catholics, spread all over the world, in the profession of the same faith.

In order to prove to you that I am not exaggerating, I here subjoin my calculations in round numbers :—

1st. About 260 Popes, from St. Peter down to Pius IX.	...	...	...	...	260
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2nd. By giving each Pope only one thousand brethren in the <i>Episcopate</i> , and supposing each bishop to have exercised jurisdiction for the space of twenty years (which is certainly more than the average), we have 5,000 bishops to each century, thus giving in the space of eighteen centuries	...	90,000
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3rd. By allowing 200 priests to each bishop (which is certainly below the actual number), and by giving them each twenty years in the priesthood, which is above the average, each century furnishes us with one million—thus the total number of Catholic priests would be	...	...	18,000,000
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18,090,260

I beg you particularly to observe that I have not counted either the inferior ministers, deacons, sub-deacons, readers, exorcists, etc., who formerly were in great numbers; or the members of monastic orders of both sexes, who were so numerous at one time that the order of Benedictines alone possessed no less than fourteen thousand houses in Europe. As these two classes have always taken a prominent part in *the work of religion*, we certainly ought to count them; thus the acting members of the Catholic religious society would number from St. Peter down to his present successor more than 40,000,000 individuals.

Nevertheless, I will keep to my first enumeration, and beg you to examine the following question:—

Does the work of religious unity, which appeared to you to present *extraordinary difficulties*, when nothing was required but the mutual agreement of twelve learned men assembled together, appear any easier when, to bring it about, we require the mutual agreement of eighteen million men belonging to fifty successive generations, and of two or three thousand different countries and languages?

*Ques.*—I own that I never should have thought that the existence of the Catholic Church implied so evident a moral impossibility.

*Ans.*—And yet we have taken but a very superficial view of the (humanly speaking) inexplicable fact of religious unity. I strongly advise you to go deeper into this magnificent subject; and in order to facilitate your studies, I will just propose two points out of many to your consideration.

It is very true that these eighteen million men are not all learned doctors, but at least they have a certain degree of knowledge, and the great majority possess sufficient talent and learning to understand what they teach. A proof that the Catholic priests know what they are saying, is that they are always listened to, and that no audience has ever equalled theirs in numbers and in assiduity.

Unless you wish to deny the evidence of your senses, you must likewise own that no class has ever produced so many literary characters constantly employed in sifting every kind of question. They are even reproached, and not altogether unreasonably, with having carried their investigations of curious and subtle questions too far. In natural science and in all great discoveries we behold the Catholic clergy constantly leading the way, down to our days, nor do they cut a contemptible figure even at present, when in consequence of



lamentable circumstances the great bulk has been forced to remain within the citadel of theology. This exception, which has existed only during the last century, does not alter the fact: The clergy has always been the most learned body of men in existence; and so it must in fact always be, since the sole business of this body is to teach the greatest of all sciences—that science which affords guidance and furnishes a groundwork to all human science, and against which all human science has unceasingly murmured, and often broken out into violent protestations. Such, however, is the body of men in which unity of thought and of word must be established in order to obtain unity of faith in that immense association, the Catholic Church. Let us suppose that out of these eighteen million individuals, two or three hundred thousand alone have been capable of having an opinion of their own concerning the deeper questions of Christian theology: is it not still, humanly speaking, an absolute impossibility to render these two or three thousand opinions one?

*Ques.*—Yes. But it may still be said that the fact of all these individuals forming one body, and constituting one hierarchy, has something to do with it—that the two hundred thousand priests think, or at least speak, under the direction of the thousand bishops—and that the thousand bishops are in their turn influenced by the Pope.

*Ans.*—A school-boy might speak thus; but I think you yourself could reply: “Friend, it is precisely the fact of all these individuals forming one body and one hierarchy, that requires explanation. Out of these two hundred thousand priests there must be at least ten thousand so learned that their bishops consult them and recommend them to those who nominate the bishops. There may, perhaps, be thirty or forty thousand sufficiently self-conceited to be displeased at not being consulted, when they could govern at least four dioceses: now, how is it, that this enormous body of men, possessing so much liberty of thought and speech, is but as one man in teaching the Catechism?”

You must not, in fact, suppose that the bishops do nothing but repeat words dictated by Rome, and that the priests never venture to say any thing but what they hear from their bishop. Open the history of the Church: how many disputes in matters of theology do we behold there recorded as having taken place between priests and between bishops. I will bring forward but two examples out of a thousand.

In the thirteenth century there lived two men, members of two monastic bodies, around which the incomparable splendour

of their genius, their learning, and their holiness, threw during their lives, and still throws, an unfading halo of glory. I mean St. Thomas Aquinas, surnamed *the Angel of the Schools*, and St. Bonaventure. If you study the lives of these two men of sublime intellect, you will find that their union in friendship and in filial submission in all matters of doctrine defined by the Church, was as perfect as their disagreement on every other point.

Turn your eyes next upon two great men of a great age; Bossuet and Fénelon, whose personal orthodoxy, and whose lives and deaths in Catholic unity no one can for an instant doubt. Nevertheless, how widely do the Author of *la Politique tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte*, and the Author of *Télémaque*, and the *Examen de conscience sur les devoirs de la Royauté*, differ in civil policy! And in Ecclesiastical policy, what disagreement between the Author (a little against his own will), of the *Déclaration de 1682*, and its *Défense*, and the Author of so many pages in which the *Déclaration* is abused, and the *Libertés Gallicanes* treated as real slavery! Finally, Bossuet accuses the liberal Fénelon of destroying free will and even man's individuality in his *Maximes des Saints*, whilst Fénelon accuses Bossuet of destroying the very soul of theology which formed Saints, by his theological Rationalism! The struggle between these two giants remained undecided down to the day when Innocent XII. found it necessary to say to the Swan of Cambrai: "*Make an act of recantation*," and to the Eagle of Maux: "*Soar not so high*."

Can you imagine it possible, humanly speaking, for unity of faith to be preserved among near fifteen thousand million Catholics, all endowed with the power of thinking and of judging their superiors, and directed by eighteen million thinkers and professors, ten thousand of whom, at least, might very easily, by their talents and influential position, have annihilated unity of thought in religion ten thousand times?

*Ques.*—It is a manifest impossibility, and I do not think at all lessened by this speech of Protestantism, that it has been the fascination of the Papacy which, by subjugating the bishops, has also subjugated the priests and the faithful.

*Ans.*—No, certainly; for the submission of ninety thousand bishops to two hundred and sixty Popes is not less superhuman than the submission of eighteen million priests to ninety thousand bishops, and the submission of fourteen or fifteen thousand million Catholics to eighteen million priests.

With regard to Papal fascination, I must beg you to look upon it in another light. Out of the many great men who have filled

the Papal Throne, look at him who was perhaps the most capable of fascinating the world by the double light of talent and holiness—St. Gregory VII. Open the pages of his history, as written by a most learned and conscientious Protestant—M. Voight; see, during the course of Gregory's gigantic struggles for the liberties of the Church, what assistance he received from his *Venerable Brethren in the Episcopate*, and from his *dearly beloved sons* the priests; listen to his lamentations over the treasonable conduct of many out of their number, and over the general weakness of the rest, and then ask yourself whether it is with such troops that such victories can be gained.

You speak of the talents and holiness of the leaders. But would not either of these causes have been sufficient to bring about disagreements, considering that talents and holiness never can correct themselves of the habit of proceeding by a path most offensive to the undying rulers of our world—the moderates.

To such Protestants as think they can explain the fact of Catholic unity by the natural ascendancy of the Popes, we may say: "Your national Churches have been from the beginning ruled by Popes and *Popesses* most jealous of their religious supremacy, and quite capable of maintaining it; for they swayed at once both the crook and the sceptre, and consequently had the right of life and death over their spiritual subjects—which right they exercised most energetically against all who contemned the State Religion. Nevertheless, far from maintaining religious unity in their states, the most zealous of their number have helped to destroy it, by indulging an anxiety to distinguish their reign by new Reformations. Thus it is that in Geneva, which is your Rome, there are fifteen different Protestant Religions, at Lauzanne seventeen, in Prussia six hundred, and in England and Russia some thousands. You will, therefore, have a certain degree of difficulty in giving an explanation of these two phenomena: 1st, how the Popes of Rome have contrived during eighteen hundred years, to keep millions of men, over whom they had no control, in subjection to a faith hostile to pride and the passions, whilst your national Popes, though possessed of every means of influencing their flocks, have sought in vain to prevent them from being *tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine*; 2ndly, how our two hundred and sixty Popes, instead of yielding as yours have done to the temptation of gaining renown by innovations and inventions, have all remained faithful to the ancient maxim: *Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*: *Let no man presume to make any change in what has come down to us by Apostolical tradition!*"

*Ques.*—I own myself convinced of the utter injustice of ascribing the perpetual unity of the Catholic Church to the influence of the priesthood. I see that, if the faults and weaknesses of many of its members had not sufficed to compromise unity, the virtues and learning of the body would have been more than sufficient to divide and subdivide the innumerable flock ten times, in the course of a single century.

*Ans.*—Let us now proceed to prove the innocence of another class of men falsely accused of having caused the perpetual unity of faith in the Catholic Church.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*That the enemies of the Catholic Church of the present day have no reason to complain of their predecessors.*

*Ques.*—Do you then think that the enemies of the Church in former ages have always displayed wisdom and courage in their war upon Catholicism?

*Ans.*—Yes, I do think so, and you will be of the same opinion when you have read the authentic history of the Church. In the account of this war, which slackened and at times appeared to have died quite away, but which in reality was only slumbering, in order to burst forth anew with redoubled fury, you may often admire how superior was the talent displayed in the attack to that exhibited in the defence, and you will say with the One Only Founder and Saviour of the Church: *The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.\** In the meantime, I will give you a little insight into the exploits of the wisdom of this world.

The enemies of the Church may be classed under three heads: I. *Anti-christians*, who would wish to destroy even the very name of Christ: II. *Anti-Catholics*, who by means of schism or heresy, would wish to found a Church or Christian religion according to their own ideas; III. *Bad Catholics*, who, without abandoning the Church, would yet wish to lead the lives of schismatics, heretics, or even of pagans. These three classes of enemies have ever existed in Europe; for when Pagan Anti-Christianity ceased to be, Anti-Christianity soon revived under the strange names of the sects of the middle ages, sects equally impious and brutish, which taught that *The Crucified Man of Calvary*

\* Luke xvi. 8.

*was a demon, and Marriage an invention of Hell.\** These three enemies have always assisted one another, even when they were not aware of it. The Anti-Christians have ever given aid to the attacks of the Anti-Catholics, and with good reason; for schismatics and heretics have never been anything but the pioneers and advanced guard of Anti-Christianity. Bad Catholics, in their turn, have constantly applauded these attacks, repeated the words of the external enemy, and said: "It is very right that the priesthood, which deals so hardly with us, should at last meet with some people who will tell it the plain truth, embellished with some exaggerations."

I maintain that all these bands have well played their part, and that if the citadel of the Catholic Church still holds out, the fault is not theirs.

*Ques.*—I own that the Anti-Christians of the first ages went to work in real earnest; but mere material violence saying, "Adore the gods, or die!" was not particularly well adapted to convert souls enamoured with a doctrine so infinitely superior to the follies of idolatry; perhaps such cruelty even contributed to tighten the bonds of the Catholic family.

*Ans.*—If you seriously are of opinion that imprisonment, chains, burning gridirons, racks, iron pincers, and the lions and panthers of the amphitheatre are means of strengthening the attachment of souls living in bodies like ours, to a religion such as Christianity, I have no more to say, saving that I have only lost time in giving you lessons in Christian philosophy; for you would prove that you are still entirely unacquainted with our nature. It appears to me that our soul is *naturally* very averse to the doctrine of Christ even in these days, when it is required to make a sacrifice of nothing but its tormentors—its vices; how, then, can it have been enamoured of this doctrine, when close behind the priest, who required it to sacrifice its dearest passions, it beheld the tormentors of the body ready to fall upon the new Christian, in the name of the Law? Does not common sense say to you as to every unprejudiced mind, *Tortures did not maintain Catholic unity; but Catholic unity was found strong enough to surmount, no one knows how, the overwhelming flood of tortures which deluged the Church with little intermission for three ages.*

On the other hand, you must not suppose that the early Christians had merely to endure the torments inflicted by the law, for the moral violence and the means of seduction employed were far more formidable. The philosophers and writers, among

\* See Hurter's *History of Innocent III.*

whom were the pagan Celsus, and the apostates, Porphyrius and Julian, neglected nothing to show forth in strong colours *the impiety, deceit, and folly of the Gallilean superstition*. When we read what has been preserved of their works, we perceive that if they were inferior to Voltaire in sarcasms and mockery, they far surpassed him in Bible learning and sophistry. To the assaults of deep learning were added frightful accusations, and these were so fully believed by popular hatred, that the most eloquent Apologists despaired of obtaining justice. To avoid details, let us merely quote these words of Bossuet: "Calumny was added . . . . to cruelty. Men who practised virtues impossible to mere nature, were accused of vices abhorrent to nature. Those who delighted in chastity alone, were accused of incest; men who did good to those who persecuted them were accused of eating their own children."\*

You see, therefore, that bloody persecutions were always accompanied by moral ones, and that the souls were tortured, even when the executioners gave breathing time to the bodies. From the time of Nero to that of Constantine, the Christians were nothing but senseless and brutal barbarians in the opinion of the pagans.

*Ques.*—I recall my words, which in truth were never seriously meant, and own that the ancient enemies of Christianity need fear no charge at the tribunal of Satan.

*Ans.*—No, provided Satan gives just sentences, of which I am by no means sure. Hoping that neither you nor I shall ever have occasion to plead at that tribunal, I rest satisfied with having justified the former enemies of Christianity in the eyes of those who in the present day perpetuate their work, and who, confiding in their deep laid schemes, fancy they will soon destroy the now old superstition which all the wisdom and power of the Regal People could not stifle while yet in its cradle.

In order to infuse some feelings of equity and modesty into the minds of these boasters, I think you might say to them :

"It is very true that your war upon Catholicism is a masterpiece of art, which would do great honour to your chiefs in a certain world which I do not name, if the king of that world were not himself its real author. Your chiefs have made an admirable use of one weapon which was not possessed by the early persecutors—I mean the press. At a given signal, ten thousand pens cast every sort of reproach on the pope, and the hundred thousand bishops, priests, and religious now living in Europe and

\* *Disc. sur l'Hist. Univ.*

America. These priests are, according to them, the implacable enemies, in one country, of absolute or constitutional monarchism, in another of republicanism, and in one word, of all governments which do not become Capuchin or Jesuit like, in order to be the slaves of the insatiable ambition of the priesthood. By their moral theology, and above all by the use they make of it in the tribunal of Penance, they are the hateful corruptors of souls, the oppressors of the poor by their greedy extortions and inextinguishable thirst of gold ; finally, men of blood, and the hirers of assassins whenever they do not think it convenient in person to vent their rage upon good patriots and the friends of the people. The fact is proved by the exhibition of the correspondence of the priesthood, by lists of proscription, etc. ; and the calumny by dint of being repeated over and over again, becomes so firmly impressed upon the minds of the people, that I have known honest readers turn so mad and furious upon the subject, as to declare that they could devour the flesh of a priest raw (these are their own expressions).

“All this is very clever, and the persecutors of ancient days, had they been possessed of the same means, could not have displayed more skill. They had this advantage over you : that they were defending a state of society which had become venerable by age ; they had on their side all the public strength, and a great number of respectable citizens. You are not so fortunate. The best man out of your number, if he has not deserved to be hanged, as not a few have, has at least acquired a right to be sent to the galleys for his shameful conduct, or to be imprisoned for bankruptcy or debt—between you and me, that is beyond all doubt. You are attacking a society which has been Christian for the last fifteen hundred years, and is still defended by armies, that you have not been able to corrupt. But your leaders have contrived, by means of the press and other resources, to compensate all these disadvantages. They have transformed the darkest reprobates into angels of light ; changed the most degraded sinners into saints desirous of nothing but the happiness of the people ; organised the extermination of the fairest portion of Christian society in the name of the Gospel of Christ, and in secret assembled together legions of hired assassins probably surpassing in numbers the Roman legions. In fact, you felt at one time so sure of success, that some of your number actually cast off the cloak of hypocrisy in the delirium of your joy.

“I own that this is a species of miracle which no one will attribute to the Almighty, but which nevertheless surpasses the power of man. However, be at least just : if you have made

every possible effort to put a stop to the work of Christ, own that your predecessors, Nero and Maxentius, deserve equal praise, and that had you been in their places, you could not have done more. Thus you will deserve that posterity should do you also justice, and say one day: If Christianity was not destroyed in the nineteenth century, together with all the knowledge and virtue it had bestowed on the world; if Europe is not a desert inhabited by a few bands of savages devouring each other, no blame is to be attached to the children of Mazzini!"

*Ques.*—Thus, I see, you at the same time defend all who have ever been the enemies of Christianity, and prove them all equally wicked.

*Ans.*—You misunderstand me: the conscience of a Christian can never allow that the pagans, who defended their ancient superstitions and social institutions against a religion entirely new to them, which tended to bring about a total change, were as flagitiously wicked as are those Christian renegades who, in order to satisfy their abominable passions, attempt to destroy by calumnies, by fire and sword, the religion which has made Europe the most enlightened, moral, free, and powerful portion of the world. If the former were for the most part highly criminal on account of their cruelty towards men who only combatted error and vice by the light of truth and virtue, yet the latter must infinitely surpass them in guilt. Beware of confounding with one another two positions so essentially different, for as different are the obligations of a Christian of the present day from those of his ancestors as is his position from theirs. The early Christians would have been guilty before God and man, if they had sought to oppose force to force, and had had recourse to arms against the established order of things; but the Christians of the present day would be equally inexcusable, if they were to hesitate about defending, against those bands of barbarians, by every means in their power, the noble inheritance which they are to transmit to future generations.

My meaning, in comparing the performances of the early persecutors of Christianity with the labours of the persecutors of the present day, was merely this: The ancient enemies of the Catholic religion are not to be blamed for its longevity; they would have crushed it ten times over, had such a thing been possible. Let us now proceed to the second class of the enemies of Catholicism.

*Ques.*—Yes, and I think I already perceive that the abettors of schism and heresy must have been more formidable enemies of Catholic unity than the open partizans of Anti-Christianity.



*Ans.*—That is clear. To be brief in treating of an endless subject, I will merely give you three points for your consideration in the historical studies which I recommend to you.

1. Schism and heresy have the merit of having opened the campaign, and of having never laid down their arms in the war against Catholic unity. No sooner had Simon of Samaria, called the Magician, given the signal, than inventors of a Christian religion, superior to that preached by Peter and the Eleven, came forward by dozens, and commenced their labours. When the Apostles, by the skill and energy of their preaching, had succeeded in subjugating many minds, and in bringing the first believers to be of *one heart and one soul*, a revulsion took place in favour of liberty of thought and action which threatened to undo every thing. What a vast field was, in fact, opened to *liberty of mind and heart* by Simon and the Nicolaites ! While the blood of the cross was yet warm, whilst the Virgin Mother was yet waiting for the hour which was to terminate her most painful separation from her Son, the disciples of Simon were worshiping their master as the Divine Word, the Spirit of Truth, and the prostitute Helen as the first and noblest of his creatures. The Nicolaites, wilfully misunderstanding an expression of the disciple Nicholas (one of the seven first deacons), taught that the demons were to be appeased by sacrifices, and our flesh purified by prostitution. The Gnostics, under a hundred different appellations, then arose to shelter this edifying doctrine beneath the mantle of their *gnosis* or transcendental theology. And when the Gnostic heresy at length declined on account of its degrading vices, the Persian slave Manes appeared towards the end of the third century, and had the honour of bequeathing to the world a race of concealed free thinkers, who infested the East and West, and devastated Europe, at least as late as the thirteenth century, if not even down to our time.\*

After having considered the comparatively minor heresies, and the enormous hydra of Manicheism which destroyed in secret the very foundations of Christian faith and morality, turn your attention to the greater heresies and schisms which have made incredible efforts to destroy Catholic unity, from Arius to Photius, from Photius to Luther, from Luther down to our own time ;

\* See *Mémoires du Jacobinisme*, by M. l'Abbé Barruel. This ancient work, which a small number of enlightened minds hardly dared to emancipate from the state of contempt and forgetfulness in which it was kept by the abettors of a blind policy, may now be read as an entirely new book by whoever wishes to comprehend the reasons of the late outburst of social barbarism.

and if you can succeed in finding one single period during which the Church had not to struggle against the assaults of avowed schism and heresy from without, and against the first attempts of the spirit of innovation from within, I shall be greatly obliged if you will point it out to me.

II. Schism and heresy have always had the advantage over mere anti-Christianity of beginning life in the very heart of the Catholic fortress, and almost always (alas! it cannot be denied) among its most efficient officers and generals. These two evil spirits, schism and heresy, which in fact are but one, besides availing themselves of the sacred character, with which their originators were generally clothed, have always contrived to address pious souls in suitable language, in the first instance, lamenting, then furiously denouncing, and finally, loudly condemning what they pleased to call abuses. Before taking final steps, the greatest number succeeded, more or less, in acquiring a reputation not only for learning, but for holiness; and when at last these pretended angels raised the standard of revolt against the Church of Christ, their dupes were too thoroughly deceived not to echo the cry of their leaders: "Down with the old Church, which has long been in her dotage! Christ is with us!"

III. The spirit of schism and heresy never lost any opportunity of turning against the Catholic Church all the powers of destruction of which it could obtain possession. The early heretics contributed materially to keep up the prejudices and rage of the Pagans against the Church, in the first place by their calumnies, and in the second by their immorality; and you may observe that whilst appearing to confound the innocent with the guilty, the persecutors yet took care to spare the guilty, and smite the innocent. "It was against her," (the great Church) says Bossuet, "that the Pagan emperors directed all their efforts. Origen tells us that but few heretics suffered anything for the faith. St. Justin, a still more ancient authority, remarks that the persecution spared the Marcionites and other heretics. The Pagans only persecuted that Church which they beheld spreading over the earth, and acknowledged her alone to be the Church of Jesus Christ."\*

Thus, at this most critical period, heresy was tolerated, if not favoured by the Cæsars. It said to the Catholics: "Join our body, and by saving your souls without being subjected to so many superstitious and troublesome practices, you will preserve

\* *Disc. sur l'Hist. Univ.*

your liberty, your wealth, and your life." You must own that this was a terrible temptation for the children of unity.

*Ques.*—Yes, certainly; but when political power fell into Christian hands, it would seem that the Church must have had her turn.

*Ans.*—And it seems to me, that the unity of the Church has been in the most danger, from the very moment when the power of the State fell into the hands of her children; and to prove that such has been the case, I need only give a brief summary of facts.

Scarcely had Constantine, together with four-fifths of his subjects, and innumerable foreigners, begun to adore Jesus Christ, when the priest Arius arose to teach the Catholic universe that Jesus Christ was only a creature. He was solemnly condemned by the first *Æcumenical Council* held at Nice in 325. The great emperor, who had strongly enforced this condemnation, at last allowed himself to be deceived, and wished to force the Church to receive the heretic into her communion. He persevered in the faith defined at Nice, but weakly suffered the Arian faction to increase around his throne, and in the Episcopal body. His son and successor was perverted by the heretics, and the long reign of Constantius was but one continued war against the Catholic faith. The anti-Christian Emperor Julian, surnamed *the Apostate*, succeeded the anti-Catholic Constantius. The Catholic Jovian was then elected, but reigned only a few months. He was succeeded by Valentinian I., who remained firm in the ancient faith which he had nobly confessed under Julian; but he had the misfortune to take for a second wife, a bigoted Arian (Justina), and to give up the East to his brother Valens, a fierce Arian, who unceasingly persecuted the Catholics until his co-religionists, the Goths, defeated and burnt him alive at Adrianople, (A.D. 378). The sons of Valentinian I., Gratian and Valentinian II., perished by a tragical death before they had realised the great hopes entertained of them; but the former rendered an immense service to the Empire and the Church by bestowing the purple upon Theodosius who so well deserved the surname of Great. He reigned sixteen years in the East, but united the West under the same sceptre only four months before his death. This great man left sons, of very moderate abilities, who divided the Empire between them (A.D. 395). Honorius was the first of the western line of imperial nonentities, which ended with Augustulus and the complete triumph of the barbarians in 476. Arcadius was the first in the East, of the far longer line of

rulers of the Lower Empire, who by their weakness, corruption, and theological fury, prepared, with some few exceptions, the triumph of the Photian schism, which was commenced in the ninth and consummated in the eleventh century. The prayer of Schism: "The Turks rather than the Pope!" was granted by the taking of Constantinople in 1453.

In the history of the West from the time of the downfall of the Empire, you may read how much support the Church received from the barbarian princes, some of whom were Pagans (and they were the least hostile), and others Arians thirsting only for the blood of the Catholics! How much suffering, persecution, and labour had not the Church to undergo, before the time (in the ninth century) when Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, and some few others appeared on the scene! Study history down to the period when Luther rendered palatable to one-third of the governments of Europe the following maxim of the new Gospel: *Cursed be he who attempts to repulse the Turks before crushing Popery!* and then ask yourself the following questions: If, since the eighth century, some princes have held out a helping hand to the Church, how did she contrive to exist before their time, when the hands of all were turned against her? And if she did contrive to maintain her unity, during the time when the political powers were all hostile to her, how did she manage to maintain it against the contending pretensions of eighty or a hundred rulers of States, who all entered the Church with a most jealous love of their personal rights, of those of their imperial, royal, ducal, or elective crowns, and of those of the nation, even if that nation consisted of but half a million of men, or even as in certain Swiss Cantons, of less than twenty thousand? By what means did the Church maintain unity amongst all these nations, in religion and even in policy, so as to make them all hasten as one man to the assistance of their brethren in the East, towards the end of the eleventh century? (the first Crusade in 1095). I shall consider you in a state of deplorable blindness if you do not perceive that this was a victory over a hundred thousand moral, material and political impossibilities—a victory which lasted from the end of the eleventh to the middle of the sixteenth century.

And since the so-called Reformations of the sixteenth century, I need not tell you that if Catholicism yet numbers many followers in Protestant kingdoms, we cannot blame Protestant politicians, who have used every means to effect the entire abolition of Popery. With regard to the assistance which the Church has received from Catholic governments during this

period, it would be unjust not to acknowledge it; but we must not exaggerate it, nor pass over the unhappily notorious fact, which the Protestant historian, Ranke, expresses in these terms: "During the century and a half which we have been cursorily glancing over, the Papacy was continually resisted, assailed, and weakened, it was even reduced to a state of complete slavery, so as to consent to be under subjection (this is the remark of the Protestant rather than the historian), and at present again, it is continually menaced, and surrounded by dangers. And who have been and are its enemies? Catholics, and Catholics alone." \*

When you have finished your historical labours, you might undertake a little work which has often formed the subject of my day dreams. Draw up a chronological table of all the dynasties and sovereigns under whose government the prodigy of Catholic unity has been maintained and propagated, from Nero down to the Pagan, anti-Catholic, and wicked Catholic rulers of the present day, who have gloried in making every effort to subvert the true Church. By putting down the names of those infidel princes only, whose kingdoms contain a pretty considerable number of Catholics, you will certainly have several thousand Pagan, Anti-catholic, and Catholic potentates. Place in one column the list of those whose government has been decidedly hostile to Catholic unity; they will undoubtedly amount to more than two-thirds of the number. Subtract from the remainder all those who manifested total indifference, and you will see how small is the number of the real defenders of Catholic unity. You will see, that these defenders have arisen up here and there, even in Pagan countries, but at great distances from each other, less to defend the Catholic Church, than to procure her some few moments' respite from the incessant war made upon her by the spirit of Anti-christianity, and more especially Anti-catholicism. Even in those countries, such as France, where the defence of the interests of the Catholic faith constitutes a traditional privilege, which has been bought by great services and by a truly generous policy, you will find frequent gaps, terrible instances of hostility, and you will often see even defenders themselves (such as Louis XIV. and Napoleon I.) destroying with one hand what they raise with the other.

This work will likewise clearly show you two things: 1st. The spirit of Anti-Catholicism has always had on its side for

\* *History of the Papacy*, etc., by Leopold Ranke.

eighteen centuries the immense majority of all the material and political powers of the earth, yet it has never done anything but come into existence and die. (See all the extinct heresies.) 2ndly. If the Catholic Church, together with all her defenders, has not been destroyed eighteen hundred times over, it can have been only because *there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord. . . . . The power of the earth is in the hand of God, and in his time he will raise up a profitable rule over it.\** If these rulers, profitable to the divine work, are rarely to be met with in history, and if the most profitable die like the most hostile, and sometimes more quickly, it is because Jesus Christ wishes all eyes, not wilfully blind, to behold in the Catholic Church *the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of truth.†*

Let us now proceed to the internal enemies of Catholic unity.

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## CHAPTER V.

*That the external enemies of the Catholic Church can attach no blame to her internal foes.*

*Ques.*—I imagine you mean that bad Catholics have always done their best to destroy the Church.

*Ans.*—Yes; and I will prove it, if you will favour me with your attention.

Although I have said but a few words concerning the most formidable internal enemies of unity (those governments which are Catholic in name, but Protestant in fact), I will not return to the subject. We will only speak of individuals, and without entering into details.

There are in all Catholic countries men more or less considerable in number, who by word and action profess to forget and even to despise the laws of God and the Church. Among these infidels, who may be likened to an enduring poison in the very bowels of the Church, all literary, all oratorical talent appears to have no other aim than to cast ridicule and abuse upon every thing that faith reveres and adores, and to embellish and deify whatever it condemns. Above all, what hostility is displayed against the priesthood and its most powerful auxiliaries, the religious orders! These infidels are for ever searching the

\* Ecclesiasticus x. 4; Proverbs xxi. 30.

† 1st Epistle to Timothy, iii. 15.

annals of those great bodies to which Europe is indebted for incalculable benefits, in order to extract from them the history of individual weaknesses and crimes, which they hold forth, exaggerate, declare to be universal, and bewail with hypocritical sorrow. If, among those two or three hundred thousand priests and religious who have preserved amongst us some small remnants of civilizing virtues, they can succeed in discovering from time to time (as must be the case), a Judas, a poisoner, an assassin, a regicide, or a public sinner, two or three thousand pens lose not a moment in repeating in twenty different ways this just sentence: "Such are priests! such are religious orders!" And yet the authors of this most crying injustice would complain bitterly of any writer who should attempt to make *them* responsible for the crimes which annually conduct the tenth part of their brethren and disciples in irreligion, to prison, or to the scaffold.

There was some truth in what a respectable Protestant once said to me, in answer to my complaints of the prejudices of his co-religionists: "In point of Anti-Catholic prejudices, you may believe me, Sir, that your literature is far worse than ours. During the last half century, there has been a kind of conspiracy among our most renowned writers to choose Catholic subjects, and vindicate your priesthood and religious institutions from all the outrages which have been heaped upon them by your ablest pens. If the Popes of the middle ages, who have been so unjustly treated by even your ecclesiastical writers, are now taking the place due to their merits, and which must be assigned to them by historical justice and by the gratitude of all the friends of civilization, to whom are they indebted for it? As much, and probably more, to our historians and publishers, than to your De Maistres, Bonalds, and Chateaubriands. Those of our number who yet calumniate and abuse you are weapons of war, which we may judge serviceable for the defence of certain interests, but leave to the admiration of the vulgar. But amongst you, on the contrary, the self-styled educated classes never cease abusing your great Catholic writers, and exalting the poorest scribblers to the very skies."

*Ques.*—Yes, this more than Protestant hostility of a great number of Catholics is an evident fact, and one which gives rise to a question I have often asked myself, and still oftener heard: "How is it that Catholics appear in general less attached to their religion than Protestants are to theirs?"

*Ans.*—I must beg you, in the first place, to observe, that if this question ever was founded on fact, it certainly is not so at

present, when Protestantism is perpetually complaining of the manner in which its temples are deserted. One of its ministers in the North tells us that "out of a hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants, scarcely five or six thousand frequent the Church." Another playfully says that "the holy day is now set apart for all kinds of orgies; that the Temple of Thalia is better attended than that of Jehovah; and that soon more attention will be bestowed upon Mademoiselle Sonntag than upon the *Sonntag* itself."\* Even when the ministers of Protestantism have not the grief of seeing their pulpits abandoned, and many members of their flocks returning to the Catholic Church, there is very great reason to doubt whether zealous Protestants are more firmly attached to their religion than the most tepid Catholics are to theirs. Attachment is proved by sacrifice. Now the following significant fact has long been noticed. "There is not a single Lutheran or Calvinist princess in Germany who is not ready, at a moment's warning, to abjure her heresy and embrace the Greek schismatic religion, for the sake of marrying a Grand-Duke.† Those French soldiers who fell into the hands of the Arabs during the war, refused, one and all, to embrace Mahometanism to save their lives."‡

If Protestants (and in general, all Christians of the separated Churches), do not display as much ill-humour and anger against their Churches as bad Catholics do against theirs, I can soon tell you the real reason.

Religions made by men living at ease, will always be to their fellow men, who also live at ease, far more pleasing than the religion of a crucified God. The former always appear so at-

\* See Heningham's *la Réforme contre la Réforme*, vol. ii. chap. 10. In order to understand Wohlfahrt's meaning, you must know that by analysing the word *Sonntag*, you will find *Sonne* Sun, and *Tag* day, consequently *Sonntag* signifies *the day of the Sun, or Sunday*.

† "For Protestantism the late Emperor Nicholas had no respect; it was only a different form of infidelity which could not impart true faith. He judged thus from experience. During his own life, his family had been allied by marriage to Protestant princesses of Wurtemberg, Prussia, Saxe Coburg, Saxe Weimar, Mecklenburg, and Hesse, and not one of those princesses, virtuous as they otherwise were in private life, had been able to resist the bribe in the form of the hand of a Russian Grand-Duke. They all abjured their religion without reluctance; and not one of the Protestant princesses of Germany has ever refused a Russian Grand-Duke, although she knew that she had not only to profess a different creed, but solemnly to accuse the faith in which she was brought up, and in which, under other circumstances, she would have died. Hence Nicholas despised Protestantism as much as he hated Catholicism."—Tr. (from *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*.)

‡ M. L. Veuillot, *Libres Penseurs*, liv. vi.



tractive, that men, who even doubt whether they are good, yet continue to practise them; and can with great difficulty make up their minds to find fault with them, even when convinced that they are bad. The latter, on the contrary, requires so much, that those who obey its precepts can scarcely do so without murmuring; while the disobedient eagerly seek to cast contempt upon it. It is very clearly a religion the most believed in, the least practised to its full extent, and the most reviled by those for whom the hour of serious reflection has not yet struck.

If, instead of trusting to appearances, you make observations for yourself, you will not dispute this fact: out of a hundred bad Catholics, fifty will readily own that, if they have pretended not to believe, it has only been because they did not feel courage to practise; out of the other fifty, more or less inclined to incredulity, five and twenty at least, will, like Diderot, wish their children to learn the Catholic Catechism, feeling that they themselves may, very possibly, some day return to it (which, if they have time, they certainly will do); and out of the remaining five and twenty, several may be surprised by sudden death or remain in disbelief, but not one of those, who wish to make their peace with God, will ever ask for any other than a priest of the Universal Church. Can observant and candid Protestants say the same of their own unbelievers?

*Ques.*—I might dispute the correctness of the numbers you have given, without, however, refusing to acknowledge that the fact is, generally speaking, notorious. But does not the existence of so many Anti-Catholics in the bosom of the Catholic Church herself, justify the objection commonly brought forward by Protestants, whenever we boast of our numbers? "Yes," they reply; "your Church cares more for numbers than worth. For fear of diminishing her flock, she keeps the goats as well as the sheep, or only condemns them in general terms, which leave individuals unscathed. And yet Catholics proudly say to us: 'Unite yourselves in one body, count even the Schismatic Greeks on your side, and you will see we yet outnumber you!'" We might, in the first place, say with Christ, that the widest and most beaten path is not that which leads to salvation. But our religious tolerance obliges us to leave it to God to judge your Church, and we will reply to her boastful language only by one remark: "Compute how many of thy adherents are really thy faithful children, and thou wilt perhaps find that there are as many Protestants within, as without thy fold."

*Ans.*—This objection is, in fact, very commonly brought forward by Methodists and other Puritans of Protestantism.

And in the very same pamphlets, where our excessive forbearance towards those Catholics who are a dishonour to the Christian name, is treated as a crime, you may read fierce declamations against the fearful intolerance of the Catholic pastors who mercilessly condemn to eternal flames all those who do not submit quietly to their rule. Such is the logic of heresy.

"Alas!" may we reply to these founders of pure and immaculate Churches, "the Catholic Church has not received from Jesus Christ the magnificent privilege which the *glorious Reformation* has bestowed upon you! She cannot, like you, say to those who oppose her laws—'Since my laws do not suit you, go and found another Church, for the great point is, not that you should all belong to one Church, but that you should have one of some sort, and be faithful to her laws.' She has never ceased declaring that Jesus Christ has founded but one Church, and that he has condemned beforehand both those who attempt to found others, and those who prefer them to his. This it is that obliges her, like the Divine Shepherd, to display the utmost patience even in regard to those sheep which are labouring under the most desperate diseases. Uncontaminated by the errors and scandals which she is ever deploring, she delays as long as possible their exclusion from her fold; because, if once banished, they would with difficulty return. Her maternal heart regards them rather as sick children raving in delirium, than as enemies. Experience shows her thousands of times each day, that even those who fill her with sorrow and load her with contempt in the heyday of their passions, may yet fill her and the angels of God with joy, by saying: *Mother, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, but I repent!* She waits with confidence for the moments of the mercy of God, and for a change in the heart of man, and suffers in silence many things of which she disapproves.

"The difference between your ten thousand Churches and our Church consists in this, that your Churches are *daughters of men* who may well *deck themselves out*, and *adorn themselves round about like a temple*, according to the expression of the Bible,\* considering that they have not *the care of souls*. The Catholic Church is the Spouse of the God who was *humbled even unto death* for the salvation of all; she is *the Mother of Sorrows*, obliged to suffer all, to sacrifice all to her mission of filling Heaven with elect, who are to come from the North and the South, from the East and the West, at the first, the third, the sixth, and even the last hour."

\* Psalm cxliii.

I have, I think, said sufficient to explain and justify the forbearance exercised by the Church towards so many who are *Protestants* in deed, and who appear to belong to her fold only by their baptisms and first Communion, and by the hope of their repentance before death. It is, however, indisputable that these Catholics in name only are a great and permanent source of danger to Catholic unity. Nevertheless, they by no means constitute the greatest of our domestic dangers.

*Ques.*—What greater danger can you find?

*Ans.*—There is a very large number of lukewarm Catholics, who are good in comparison with those of whom we have been speaking, who respect and love religion, and even sometimes practise it, but who do it more harm than all its enemies together; for they introduce the poison of the spirit of the world into its very heart.

The priesthood is the heart of Catholicism, the organ which causes Christian life to circulate through the veins of all its members. Now, the very life of the priesthood consists in its unity; its unity consists in the spirit of its great High Priest, Jesus Christ; and the spirit of Jesus Christ is opposed to the spirit of the world, which is defined by the Scripture as being *the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes (avarice), and the pride of life.\**

Now the mission, which lukewarm Catholics have always taken, and always will take upon themselves, is to teach the priesthood how to maintain religion and cause it to be loved, by reconciling the spirit of Jesus Christ with that of the world; that is to say, by sacrificing the former to the latter. If the priests refuse to take these friendly hints, they are called narrow-minded, obstinate, and pitiful theologians speaking an unknown tongue. The deficient education of the priesthood is feelingly lamented; and it is a source of deep sorrow that those, who ought to be *the light of the world, the salt of the earth*, should remain stationary amid universal progress, and should allow so great a distance to intervene between themselves and those whom they ought to enlighten and direct. In short, these zealous Catholics cry down all priests who will not be led astray by them, and assist Anti-Christian revolutionists in bringing about such reformations in clerical education as may form ministers of the Gospel believing neither in the Church, nor in Christ, nor even in God.

Unfortunately, priests do not always resist these suggestions,

\* 1st Epistle of St. John, ii. 16.

so pleasing to human nature. Although on their guard against those decided worldlings, who either openly abuse them or preach contempt of every duty, they willingly give ear to these men whom they regard, and not entirely without reason, as good and sincere friends. By insensible degrees they become tepid and relaxed, and in the same measure as they depart from the spirit of their Divine Master, they lean to the earth, and disagree among themselves. Petty intrigues, rivalries, and ambitious desires arise, burst forth, and soon furnish sufficient cause for those who have perverted the priesthood to exclaim, whenever opportunity offers: "And can those be priests?" And these criticisms, which are in some degree founded, prepare the way for the reception of those shameful calumnies which represent the priesthood to be the scourge of the country.

Virtuous individuals such as these, whilst disorganising the clergy, and exposing them defenceless to the blows of the enemy, hawk about and propagate the most dangerous doctrines among the chosen portion of the Catholic flock, and even among the priests. Let one sample suffice—*Religion should have nothing whatever to do with politics.* These were the words of the spirit of evil, which knew very well, that if religion were once separated from politics, politics would speedily separate men from religion. And thousands of pious fools have ever since repeated, over and over again to the clergy: *Religion should have nothing whatever to do with politics.* I will not say anything of the harm that has been done us by the success which this absurd speech has met with; for if I once were to enter upon the subject, I should never be able to leave it. I will confine myself to one final observation on the logic of these counsellors of the priesthood.

While the priest is forbidden to have anything whatever to do with those politics, which can acquire light and life from him alone, as I will show later, incredible efforts are made to drag him precisely to that arena which he ought most to avoid, and where combats are perpetually taking place, not concerning those eternal maxims which it is the mission of the priest to preach and defend at the peril of his life, but concerning the ever varying forms of government of which he ought to respect all so much, as not to identify himself with any. The Royalists regard him with suspicion, if he does not, by upholding an absolute monarchy, render himself odious to the more moderate royalists and to sincere republicans. The latter are astonished and indignant if he does not discover their principles in the Gospel and the republican form of government in the Church. How many complaints have been raised by the partisans of constitu-

tional monarchy against the indifference, or rather mistrust, of the clergy in regard to *the most perfect of governments!* How they have lamented, and still do lament in certain countries, over their blind and secret opposition to liberal institutions! Who, more than they, have brought into vogue, however unintentionally, those axioms of Young Europe and of Mazzini: "The first step towards liberty is contempt and hatred of the priesthood—the second its utter extermination!"

I have only given a brief sketch of this subject, and yet you will perceive that the internal dangers which threaten Catholic unity are by no means less than the external.

We must now conclude our studies on the Church.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*That the Catholic Church affords us the spectacle of two standing miracles.*

*Ques.*—What are those miracles?

*Ans.*—Its doctrinal unity and its priesthood. Its doctrinal unity, as you have seen (ch. iii.), cannot be the work of its ministers, since their number and character would have offered insurmountable obstacles to the adoption of one common doctrine, had they been obliged either to invent it, or merely to extract it from the Bible. This impossibility of agreement arises likewise from the nature of the Catholic doctrine, which is eminently spiritual, mysterious and supernatural, not merely in its dogmatical definitions, but also in its precepts and in the obligations which it imposes upon us, of subjecting the flesh to the law of the spirit, and of sacrificing visible things for things invisible.

To say that such a religion can have been the result of human discussions and deliberations is madness. Do we not know what the spirit of man is?—all eagerness for natural and sensible things, but all indifference about the invisible, which speak not to the senses. It therefore can never have invented a spiritual, supernatural religion. If the mind of one man were to form the idea of such a religion, the mind of another would reject it as folly. When our intellects rise above the sphere of the senses to soar in the spiritual world, they wander and diverge infinitely. The strongest, remaining true to the point from which

they started, and following a straight line, soonest reach the extreme term of error—flagrant self-contradiction. Nothing is more evident than that common minds could not have invented the system of Catholic doctrine; and that if extraordinary intellects had invented it (which is an impossibility), they would have destroyed it ten thousand times over, in one quarter of a century. And then, are we not acquainted with the heart of man, the everlasting sanctuary of *self*, a very small portion of it being assigned to God, and a mere corner to domestic affections? Is it possible that Catholic charity, so fruitful in sublime self-sacrifice, can have emanated from this centre of everything that is mean and selfish?

Utterly without power to create Catholic unity, and equally without power to maintain it among themselves, the members of the priesthood would have been also powerless to defend it against its numerous enemies. Even supposing this unity had been able to withstand the efforts of all pure Anti-Christians, from Nero down to Voltaire, Robespierre, and Mazzini, how could it ever have withstood the internal and external assaults of schismatical and heretical Anti-Catholics? (ch. iv.) Have we not shown that, even had it survived the attacks of these enemies, it must have been annihilated ten thousand times over through the agency of good and bad Catholics? (ch. v.)

Now if any one of these causes of destruction appears to you sufficient, how do you account for the success with which the Church has withstood the uninterrupted and combined efforts of all three during eighteen centuries? Does not the phenomenon of unity of faith in near two hundred million Catholics, scattered all over the universe, appear to you an utter impossibility, humanly speaking? And since this phenomenon, which implies an utter impossibility, is yet a tangible and indisputable reality, I leave you to imagine my final inference.

*Ques.*—I can foresee what it must inevitably be, even were I to dispute the correctness of the cipher of two hundred million Catholics, which does not seem to me to agree with that given by most geographers.

*Ans.*—I am sorry to be obliged not to agree with *most geographers*, who allow the Catholic Church only from one hundred and thirty-five to one hundred and forty millions of children—the Danish Protestant Malte Brun even allowing her no more than eighty millions. But my sorrow is diminished by the remembrance that these conscientious writers, who drew up the table of statistics in their private studies, differ *slightly* from one another concerning the numbers of the population of the earth,

to the extent of two or three *hundred millions*—one of them (the Lutheran minister Canz, who wrote in 1744) reducing the number of the population of the globe to *sixty millions*; whilst his Anglican contemporaries, the authors of the *Universal History*, make it amount to *four hundred millions*! You must understand that these variations in the statistics of the population of the earth must have given rise to others in their religious classification, and that this fact must rather shake our faith in the calculations of geographers. It appears to me that, if there is any one in the world who ought to know pretty correctly the exact number of the Catholics, it must be the Head of the Universal Church, without an order from whom not one bishop can undertake the spiritual government of the smallest flock, and to whom each bishop is obliged to send a detailed and conscientious account of the state of his own diocese. Now as the ecclesiastical statistics of Rome vary from one hundred and ninety to upwards of two hundred million Catholics, I do not see why you should find fault with my statements on this head.

Yet, if you wish, I can agree to the number fixed by the geographer Adrien Balbi, one hundred and thirty-six millions; it will make no difference in my proofs.

See, therefore, and compare. The follower of Mahomet (a member of that religious body which possesses the most faith, and is given the least to the exercise of reason,) cannot cross the boundary line of his political country, without likewise leaving his religious country behind him; if he yet meets with Mahometans, they are heretics who understand and practise the law of the prophet in a different manner from himself. If he studies history, he finds that the Sun of his faith arose only in the year of the *Hegira* (622), and that the dark night of infidelity enveloped the hundred and fifty generations of men who lived before the time of the prophet. The *orthodox æcumenical schismatic Greek* and the *orthodox Russian* (both which Churches are laid waste by innumerable sects each more *orthodox* and *æcumenical* than the others) in vain look in foreign lands for the *Greek æcumenical orthodox* religion and the *orthodox Russian* religion. Pent up within the bounds of the religious supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and of the Holy Synod governing in the name of the Czar, they cannot go back farther than the eleventh and twelfth centuries, without perceiving that their ancestors were the spiritual subjects of the Roman Pontiff. Those among Protestants who are the least disunited, the members of *the Church by law established*, the Anglicans, do not meet with a single Anglican, out of the British dominions, who is not like

them, a traveller. By computing their numbers, they will see that they only form the twentieth part of the hundred and sixty million men who inhabit their three united kingdoms, colonies and Indian possessions. If they study their religious genealogy, they will find that they are the production of the *Virgin Queen*, Elizabeth, or of her father, Henry VIII. ; and the following question will naturally present itself : *Whence has the dynasty of the Tudors and of their successors derived the right of governing the souls of their subjects, and of being the administrators of the religion of Jesus Christ ?*

Now cast your eye over the map of the world, from north to south, and from East to West, and point out if you can, a single country where the Catholic traveller does not meet with members of his religious family, and the two prodigies which were first shown him by his mother : I mean, the Catechism and the priest of Rome. Put to any child well instructed in the Catechism questions on the history of religion. Without having read the *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle*, he will tell you how he professes the same faith as all men of good will, from Adam down to us.\*

I have called the Catechism and the priest of Rome *prodigies*. It is no longer necessary for me to prove to you the impossibility, humanly speaking, of the creation and perpetual preservation of this Catholic, universal Catechism, which we see in the hands of Constantine the Great, who studied in it his duty as a Christian and as a prince, and in those of the slaves of his empire, who discovered in it their true nobility ; which we behold later in the hands of the barbarians, who after having cast it a hundred times into the flames, learned from it "to burn what they had hitherto adored, and adore what they had hitherto burnt"—which we behold in the hands of a Charlemagne, of an Alfred the Great, of a St. Louis, of their vassals of high and low degree,

\* "How great a consolation is it to the children of God," exclaims Bossuet, "but likewise how clear a proof of the truth, when they see that from Innocent XI., who now worthily fills the first see of the world, we can go back without any interruption to St. Peter, constituted by Jesus the prince of the Apostles ; thence to Aaron and Moses, thence to the Patriarchs, and thence to the beginning of the world : What a marvellous succession, tradition and connection ! If our minds, which are naturally uncertain, and tossed to and fro by the fallacy of their own reasonings, require that some secure authority should decide those questions which pertain to eternal salvation, what greater authority could be desired than that of the Catholic Church, which comprises in herself all the authority of past ages, and the ancient traditions of mankind, even to the very beginning of the world !" Conclusion of the *Disc. sur l'Hist. Univ.*



of the countless multitude of their serfs—the Catechism which Louis XIV. read at Versailles, protected among the Catholics of the East, and propagated among the polished infidels of Asia and the wild tribes of America by the support he afforded the missionary priests—the Catechism which Napoleon, in the days of his glory, assigned as the foundation of the educational system of his university, and which after his downfall he studied at St. Helena, and took as the basis of his peace with God and the world.

It only remains for me to say to you one word concerning the Catholic priest, who is in my opinion the greatest and most impossible of prodigies; for he is the *living Catechism, the Catechism of flesh and blood.*

If this appears to you to be an exaggeration, tell me how this man has come down to us, the children of the nineteenth century—this man, who from the time he left the Supper-room at Jerusalem (towards the year 32) has so many times verified these prophetic words of the Master who sent him: *Thou shalt be hated by all men, for my name's sake!* \*

Tell me how it happened that this man, proscribed by all the powers of the earth, has yet seen the proudest potentates humbling themselves before him, and saying: “*Father give me thy blessing, and reconcile me with God!*” how it happened that after having escaped thousands of times by flight from the fury of the rabble, he has yet returned, thousands of times, borne along in triumph by the multitude; or how it has come to pass, that, even when a price was set upon his head, the den which he inhabited has been besieged by multitudes eager to listen to his word!

Explain how it is, that words which make kings and their bravest generals tremble issue forth from those lips, often not endowed with eloquence—words which change the hearts of courtiers, and convert abandoned women to a life of virtue—words, which inspire oppressed innocence with feelings of patience and forgiveness, and expiring guilt with repentance and resignation upon the very scaffold; how it is that, when persecuted, the priest ascends the scaffold as he would the altar steps; how it is that his sacred character suffers not, even when the criminal whom he is preparing for death is another self—a priest!

Finally, explain how it is, that in the soul of this man, who, humanly speaking, is but narrow-minded, there are always

\* Matthew, x. 22.

to be found prayers, blessings, and benefits for those who have the most cruelly calumniated, cursed, and persecuted him ; how it is that, when returning to a country yet smoking with the blood of priests, he at the first signal hastens to the bedsides of the executioners themselves, and having reconciled them with God, exclaims in the accents of faith : *Depart, Christian souls, and like the great Apostle Paul, who was originally a persecutor of the Church of Jesus Christ, and stained with the blood of his ministers,\* go with confidence to receive a crown in Heaven, by the side of the martyrs whom you have sent thither before you !*†

\* Acts, vii. 57.

† One of the most admirable and marvellous characteristics of the Catholic priesthood is its celibacy. Called, as the Catholic priest is, to have but one love on earth, and that the same love as angels have, in order, as St. Paul says (1st Cor. vii.), that being *without a wife, he may be solicitous for the things only that belong to the Lord*, where does he find that supernatural love which supplies the place to him of earthly love ? What is it that supplies the place to him of what others must cling to and enjoy ? An eminent Prelate does not hesitate to answer that it is the adorable Eucharist—Jesus ever present in the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar. “Do you think,” he says, “that we (the Catholic priests) could stand, not only the labours that others may have, but the total privation of all they keep and enjoy, if we had not another object of love, and if we had not the constant renewing of the grace of our vocation, and of the feelings that make it compensation ? Look at the ministers of other worship ; they may take up their lives in much that resembles our ministry. They may preach, they may visit the sick, and go from place to place doing good, but they must retain to themselves the joys and comforts of domestic life. They must take for themselves what harmonises with the ordinary sympathies of men. They must have a comfortable home, they must have a faithful companion to cheer them after their day’s work ; they must see a growing family around them, who partake of their love and return it ; they must have a home, in fine, in which they may find some comfort in compensation for the ordinary labours that occupy them. But the Catholic priest must renounce all this. He pretends not to it. Willingly, and at the foot of God’s altar, he renounces it, and God alone is to be his portion. Do you think that we could go on from day to day, bearing the heat and burden thereof, unless we had some refreshment somewhere ? I can only say that were the blessed Sacrament, were the saving dogma of the real presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of his love, ever abiding on our altars to feed and nourish our souls, withdrawn from us, our vocation would be one full of darkness and misery, and soon cut off the energies of mind and body by its dreariness and solitude. But when we have recourse each day to him who was humbled and despised, when we see that he daily allows us to come nearest to him, when we daily, at the foot of the altar, *renew our youth as the eagle*, we keep up the ardour with which we first consecrated ourselves to him. And thus he pours into our souls such immeasurable blessings, such an abundant overflow of grace, that we can go forward to toil, sure that he is within us individually. . . . Those who speak of this saintly state (of a priest or religious) in the language of a perverted

I have now furnished you with ample matter for your reflections on the Catholic Church. If, after your reflections, you retain any doubt concerning the hand which founded and yet preserves the most impossible (humanly speaking) of all sublunary institutions, I think I shall have every right to apply to you (slightly altered) the words of Napoleon to his interlocutor at St. Helena: "If you do not see that the Catholic Church is from God, I was wrong in ever supposing you to possess a mind capable of understanding philosophy."\*

#### IV.—THE EXISTENCE OF MAN.

##### CHAPTER I.

*That the men whom God created bear no resemblance to the men who have been invented by the genius of modern times.*

*Ques.*—What do you mean by *the men who have been invented by the genius of modern times?*

*Ans.*—It would take a long time to describe them; and I will here merely point out to you a few of their most remarkable characteristics.

You have no doubt read in some of the two or three thousand

world, know not what it is that forms the true bond between the soul and the interior religious life, and have no idea of the extent of true delight, of sweetness and deliciousness which those souls find in the contemplation of their blessed Redeemer, or when they behold him coming to them in the same manner that he went to Martha and Mary. Every pure and holy feeling of the heart gathers round him. Faith looks into his calm and assuring countenance: Hope seizes upon his hand, and fears not to go forth amidst conflicts and troubles so long as she has hold of Him: Love throws her arms round him, and clings there, and buries her countenance in his sacred bosom without saying a word; and Penitent Sorrow sits at his feet and weeps. There is joy, there is happiness, there is a bliss that is only of Heaven in the soul, while it feels thus sensibly the presence of its Lord.

And it is not only the priest, the religious, who feel the sweetness of the heavenly banquet, but, in proportion, every child of the Church who goes to it with a soul free from sin and a heart full of love. O tenderness which not Heaven itself possesses (for it is a gift only to man)! O sweetness which nought else in this world can give! how is it that thou shouldst be rejected by those who have the same evidence before them as us of thy existence! . . . "—Tr.

\* See Fact ii, ch. 1.

volumes by which the young men of our universities are instructed in Religion, Philosophy, and History, that the sixteenth century witnessed a most fortunate revolution—the emancipation of thought. This marvel was brought about by a monk of Saxony who was courageous enough to cast to the winds both his own habit and the veil of the nun whom he chose for his wife. Men who had hitherto been slaves, and forbidden to think, except by permission of the Pope, recovered the use of reason; that is to say, in those countries where Catholicism did not succeed in stifling liberty in its cradle.

From that time, even if men still come forth out of nothing (which question, as being too bigotted, is never examined by our moderns), even if they are still born of a woman, and weep in a state of utter helplessness for a long time (which is possible), nothing in them betrays the weakness and misery observable in children of the middle ages. They come into the world, invested by Nature with her choicest gifts; they are equal to their parents in all things, and to the religious and civil rulers of the kingdom which they deign to honour with their presence; they are in short, by the very fact of their existence, high priests and kings. They may possibly feel physical wants, care must therefore be bestowed on their bodies; that is at once their right and your duty. With regard to their soul (supposing they have one, which is by no means considered certain), it possesses in itself *the light of lights, the greatest authority there is*; in fact, *the sole authority*, reason. If there is a God (which may very probably not be the case), and if by chance he has been pleased to give a moral law to man, you may feel secure, that this law is engraved upon the conscience of the child. Beware therefore of obscuring, or otherwise injuring the consciences of your children by instilling into them doctrines said to be revealed. They must receive instruction, but from the hands of those masters who have been prepared by philosophy and the state for the sublime mission of forming great thinkers and great citizens.

Since the blissful transformation brought about by the genius of modern times, have men still been subject to sickness and death? This again is too trivial a question to occupy the attention of free thinkers. If they do not openly discuss it, they may yet be said to give an answer in the negative by imposing upon us a task, which necessarily excludes even the idea of death. In fact, these gentlemen require each of us to create a domestic, a national, and an universal system of religion, of philosophy, and of politics. Whatever we find settled and

decided on these matters when we enter the world, is open to our revision. Real freedom of examination implies, that, like the great Descartes, we should provisionally reject all such decisions, as being very possibly only the offspring of prejudice, and admit nothing, but what we have put to the proof.

Now, I ask every man of good sense, whether such a work as this would not require at least several hundred years for its proper performance?

If, before I can be a Christian, I am to form a Christianity for myself out of the Bible, as is required by the glorious Reformer Luther, and so many of his docile children, what a laborious undertaking is before me! I have been studying the Bible for the last thirty years, and yet I acknowledge my incapacity to discover in it any form of Christianity superior to that taught by the Catholic Church, which form is perfect enough, whatever men may say, to have lasted eighteen hundred years. Would it be unreasonable in me to require your guarantee, gentlemen of the Bible, for a life of at least two thousand years in order to discover a better system?

Leave the Bible for what it is (an Eastern poem), say the Free Thinkers, and instead of a religion (which is a superannuated idea) make a system of philosophy; listen to the voice of reason alone. Agreed; but I have been consulting this oracle of philosophy for the last thirty years, and even, not confiding in my own reason, which yet is as good as another's, I have also been consulting the oracles of the most celebrated philosophers. Nevertheless, I must own with M.M. Cousin, Jouffroy, P. Leroux, etc., that in order to found a really magnificent and useful system of philosophy, nothing is more requisite than to find out how to set about it.

If you wish me to make this important discovery, you must add at least thirty lustres to the ten of my life, which will soon come to an end, and even then I cannot answer for success.

Finally, it is my right to be, if not an absolute sovereign (which would be the best), at least an integral part of domestic, provincial, national, magisterial, and universal sovereignty. I must defend my rights (and consequently study them) against the encroachments of my parents and relations; and I must also stand up for my sacred inalienable right to a share in the government of my parish, province, and nation. I should be a slave (according to the doctrine of Rousseau, and also of his master, Montesquieu), if I considered myself bound by any law to which I had not originally agreed in person, or by a delegate. Moreover, as a member of the great body of mankind, ought I

not to study the great questions of humanity at large, and attempt speedily to solve them?

How could a man who is aware of the numerous important functions he has to fulfil, ever degrade himself by thinking of dying?

*Ques.*—You forgot one function of man, which, though less dignified, is yet highly important, viz., to procure himself food, shelter, and clothes. Is the man of modern times to eat grass, go naked, and sleep in the open air?

*Ans.*—You are bringing forward more of those vulgar questions which a genius of modern times always carefully banishes from his sublime meditations. No doubt most of our philosophers have eaten good bread, and dwelt in sumptuous houses, but they may have been ignorant how the poor procured themselves food, and by how much toil the possession of one poor cottage has to be purchased. Some, like Montesquieu, were born in opulence, with hereditary rank; others, like the autocrats of our universities, have obtained comfortable situations, with large salaries in return for their services in teaching a system of philosophy, the first principles of which are still undiscovered. Besides, would it not be possible for minds endowed with the faculty of creating a new species of men, to create some new resources, which should not be the offspring of labour? What is there to prevent them from decreeing that *it is the duty of the State to provide every citizen with a certain means of subsistence, food, proper clothing, and a mode of life not injurious to his health?*\*

But enough about the fabulous being imagined and proclaimed by the false religionists, philosophers, and politicians of modern times.

When we observe the success which this idle trash has met with among the self-styled educated classes, and the adoration bestowed upon those eloquent speakers who have advanced it; when we see that these drivellings have been transformed by the lower classes into doctrines worthy of savages, does not the question naturally present itself—of what use can be the learning of the so-called enlightened classes, and the common sense of the people?

*Ques.*—The question certainly presents itself very naturally, but so does its answer. The learning of the enlightened classes serves to embellish the sheer folly, and cause it to be worshipped; the common sense of the people manifests itself in understanding and practising these new religions.

\* Montesquieu *De l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxiii. ch. 29.

*Ans.*—You are perfectly right. For the last three hundred years the greater part of the *talking* class have been saying to the working classes: "The Catholic Catechism has produced nought but ignorance and slavery; now we, who are the friends of liberty and of the advancement of the people in learning and happiness, have no dearer wish than to labour to ameliorate your moral and material condition, and we should be successful, were it not for your obstinacy in believing no one but the priests." "Speak! and we will hearken to you, we will support you," was the reply of a portion of the populace. So well did they in fact speak, act, and support one another, that towards the year 1850, a large portion of the people were sufficiently enlightened to be able to make their words echo from one extremity of Europe to the other, when they said, "At last we have been enlightened concerning the social system, which has lasted so long, and consisted in this: The government is to be in the hands of the aristocrats who are to enjoy themselves; religion is to pertain to the people, who are to see nothing, and to endure all things. Therefore, the world must be renovated by a general extermination of priests and aristocrats!"

Let us profit by this awful lesson, and consider what is the real nature of man, as God created him. Do we enter this world in the possession of treasures of knowledge, wisdom, and virtue, as is supposed by the dupes of Anti-Christian Liberalism, who believe in the Author of *Emile*? Or do we bring with us into the world a fund of incorrigible perversity, as was supposed by Luther, Calvin, Beza, and the Atheist Hobbes, and as is still supposed by all the partisans of despotism, who say: "Man is a savage animal, and its master must keep it in chains and beneath the lash, under pain of being devoured." In one word, are we by nature angels or brute beasts?

*Ques.*—It appears to me that we are neither the one nor the other, but may become either, according to the will of our teachers. By nature we are indifferent alike to good and to evil; it is by education that we are made virtuous or wicked.

*Ans.*—I do not agree in your opinion of this pretended indifference to good and to evil, which is daily disproved by Christian philosophy and by experience. The work and the image of a Being sovereignly perfect, man must have received, and, in fact, has received in his being an impress of goodness. There is, even in the most depraved souls, a degree of natural uprightness, which makes them regard the virtues they do not possess, as preferable to the vices which exercise tyranny over them; and there is even in the most upright souls a degree of natural cor-

ruption and weakness which turns them from the good they love, and entices to the evil they detest. Every one bears within him and feels the presence both of the *old man* and of the *new man*, whose existence was recognised by Pagan, but can be explained and reconciled only by Christian wisdom. The old man, or *natural man*, is the first that appears within us. At our birth, how wretched, weak, and dependent is our condition, in comparison with that of other animals! Even those animals, the education of which requires the greatest length of time, come to the full use of their instinct and strength long before the most forward child can distinguish its proper food, much less provide for itself. And how fragile is our existence! Half the men born into this world do not live to reach their prime; and the rest, whether old or young, can never feel secure of one single hour of life.

If our Creator has destined us to perform here below the great things supposed by modern philosophy, it must be owned that he has committed an egregious mistake in forming us of material so fragile. We have a right to say to him, "O Lord God, wherefore hast thou displayed so much wisdom in the construction of our bodies, if we are all to fall to dust, some of us before we have even begun, and the rest before we have completed the noble tasks appointed us?"

But do we at least possess some moral or intellectual superiority, and have infants, since the fortunate revolution of the sixteenth century, been endowed with talent and adorned with virtue? Ask all nurses and teachers. It appears that, even in Protestant countries, young men of superior talent still require ten or twelve years to complete their studies. And when men study perseveringly for the space of even thirty or forty years longer, they still feel more and more the truth of the proverb of Aristotle: *The eye of the soul is affected by truth in the same manner as that of the owl by the light of the sun.* But it is even more difficult to implant virtue in the heart than knowledge in the mind; for it meets therein its sworn foe—vice. Even the so-called *natural* virtues cannot resist the cravings of egotism, when they are supported merely by reason and natural conscience. I will give a few instances.

Is there any feeling more strongly implanted in the human heart by the Author of nature, than maternal love? No. Yet you may behold a mother of the Oceanic Isles, of mild and gentle disposition, and careful of her children, who, on being asked how many she has had, will answer with innocent candour, "I have had twelve, eight of whom I have strangled, and four



of whom I have brought up!" Put the same question to a Chinese woman, who is far more civilized, and she will answer with equal candour, "I have had twelve; my husband has exposed four, sold four more, and here are the remaining four!"

After the love of a mother for her child, can any love be naturally stronger than that of a child for its mother? Yet, turn to those children of naturally good dispositions, who are pressing around a Catholic missionary to be instructed in the Catechism, and listen to their answer when asked, "Where is your mother, my dear children?" Carelessly they reply, "Our mother was strangled when our father died!" And they will even be greatly surprised at the missionary's condemnation of this custom.\*

Let us now turn to the very centre of Hindoo civilization, beneath the flag of the East India Company. The district of Visingapatam is inhabited by the *Condes*, a people endowed by nature with excellent dispositions, but like the ancient masters of the world, accustomed to bring up numbers of young men for public and private massacres; with this difference, however, that the Romans massacred men for amusement, and to *kill time*, as Seneca observes, whereas the Condes only offer these hateful sacrifices to draw down the blessing of the gods on their fields and families. So attached are they to this custom, sanctioned by religion and hallowed by time, that rather than renounce it, they appear determined to be cut to pieces by the English army.†

\* "Nothing can be more painful than to hear these little creatures, on being asked where their mother is, answer with a smile, 'Our mother?—oh, she was strangled!' And if we exclaim: 'What a fearful crime! what a terrible misfortune!' they reply directly: 'Why did my father die? Since he died, my mother was obliged to be strangled.'"—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*; from a letter of Père Rougeyron. September number, 1851, p. 377.

† "Any pretext serves for this massacre; a public scourge, a severe illness, a family festival, a wedding, etc. One week before the time appointed for the sacrifice, the intended victim is bound, and provided with whatever he desires in the way of food and drink. During the interval, the inhabitants of all the neighbouring villages are invited to join in the festival. When all are gathered together, the victim is led to the place of sacrifice. In general, care is taken that he be in a state of inebriety, and after he is fastened securely, the multitude dance around him, and each individual hastens to cut off a piece of flesh, which he takes away, so that the victim is cut alive into a thousand pieces. Each piece of flesh ought to be warm and bleeding, and is hastily conveyed to the field intended to be fertilized."—Letter of Monsgr. Negret, Vicar Apostolic of Visingapatam, *ibid* p. 403. The habitual readers of the *Annals* will see that I have not taken the pains to peruse the whole immense collection, but out of thousands of similar, or even more frightful facts, have only selected the first I came to.

You may now form some idea of what men can do, when guided solely by the noble inspirations of reason and natural conscience.

*Ques.*—No doubt what you have alluded to is awful, but it may be said that you have travelled far to find your examples.

*Ans.*—Do you wish me to bring forward examples from the very centre of European civilization—to open the annals of '92, '93, '94—to quote from Prudhomme and those who have published the most moderate abridgments of his writings (*Histoire générale des crimes commis pendant la Révolution*), or to speak of the exploits of the Representatives of the people in the Departments, as written by themselves? In one word, do you wish me to point out scenes of ferocious cruelty, such as perhaps the sun never shone upon in China and Oceanica, which were really witnessed in the most generous minded and compassionate of continental nations? Or can you have forgotten certain accounts that caused us to shudder a year ago, and which proved that the Regenerators of 1852, had they but had time, would have given us cause to regret the executioners of '93. Must I lift a corner of the veil which human justice has very properly cast over certain events?

No; I prefer telling you how a really good education has power not only to prevent men from becoming worse than tigers, but likewise to make them the images of *their Father who is in Heaven*.

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## CHAPTER II.

*That for men to be capable of any good, it is most important that they should not have to remake the world.*

*Ques.*—It appears to me that the method of education which aims at peopling the world with creative geniuses is too absurd to need serious refutation.

*Ans.*—This method, however absurd, is yet extremely fascinating, as has been proved by the awful success of the revolutionary motto: *Society, in its present state, is fit only to be destroyed; let us make a new world.* We need not be surprised at its meeting with sympathy in our hearts, for we are all born discontented with our actual condition, and eager for change. The cause of this will be found in that love of happiness, blind indeed, but ardent, which God himself implanted in our souls

as the mark of our greatness, and for our encouragement in our career towards the noble end for which he created us.

If you were to tell men that the ways of the world were truly hateful, and that far too much of it was overrun with sin and misery, the majority would believe you, for you would have said nothing but what is felt by every soul not entirely immersed and buried in pleasure. But if you were to add, with the Revolutionary Reformers, that it only depended upon ourselves to bring about a change for the better, our good mother, Dame Nature, having sufficiently provided for the happiness of her children if they would only make a proper use of her gifts by organising society in a manner more suitable to her wishes, your proposals would be really absurd; for no organisation of society could save us from the common scourges of Nature or from the heavy burdens of ignorance, sin, and death. And yet this absurd proposal is sure to be entertained by all who are no longer enlightened by Christian faith. "Let us make the attempt!" exclaim the least credulous: and the attempt will never seem to be complete till the golden Age has been restored upon earth by the utter extermination of all the pretended enemies of the intentions of nature.

The fever of Revolutions will therefore distract mankind, and the most chimerical and monstrous theories be hearkened to, so long as our methods of education continue to foment, instead of combatting, the most senseless and inhuman, but at the same time the most cherished error of the human heart.

*Ques.*—What is that error?

*Ans.*—This; *that men are placed in this world solely for the purpose of enjoyment.* A senseless error, because it has been proved to be an error by universal experience. Cast your eyes over the whole world, in which generation succeeds generation with the speed of lightning, and what do you behold? A hundred million children, in palaces and cottages alike, filling the air with their cries, and falling victims in great numbers to death; two hundred millions more, who cease troubling their nurses only to become a burden to those men and women whose office it is to educate them; four or five hundred million men of every age, from twenty to sixty, condemned to work like galley slaves, and the most wretched among whom are those who, secure from the assaults of want, have only to suffer the torments of *ennui*; finally, a hundred thousand aged men and women, who are only waiting in fear and anguish for the last blow that terminates earthly existence. In a world like this, where our lives glide rapidly on amid sorrow and deception, between the

helpless cries of infancy and the appalling horrors of the grave, are we justified in telling men to pass their years in enjoyment!

This error is likewise most inhuman. It was the source of that barbarous policy of the ancients, which sacrificed twenty men to the pleasures of one. It founded and maintains Asiatic despotism and Mussulman barbarity, which transform political power into a right to oppress the people, woman into a mere article of trade, and children into troops of eunuchs. But this error, which is so cruel to the poor and helpless, whom it abandons to the mercies of the strong, is not less fatal to the oppressors than to their victims. The Creator of the world has ordained that the sinner should be the first to suffer from the evil he inflicts on others. Seneca well expresses this: *Vice, he says, is condemned to drink the largest share of the poisons it mingles.\**

Eagerness for egotistical and sensual enjoyments is an anticipated hell, a real torture of soul and body, which, by rendering man as insupportable to himself as to his fellow creatures, prepares the way for the mania of suicide or murder. The passion of the Romans for sanguinary spectacles increased with their sensuality. When we read the history of the most hateful tyrants the world has produced, from Tiberius and Nero down to Henry VIII., we perceive that their excessive cruelty can be accounted for only by their excessive moral sufferings, in the same manner as those moral sufferings are accounted for only by their excessive impurities. Therefore, to encourage men in the love of earthly enjoyments is to precipitate them headlong into a state of barbarism, and in those countries where Christianity has made known the principle of the equality of rights, it is, in fact, to preach a general massacre.

Nevertheless, that error, which induces us to regard the world as a place of enjoyment, is the dearest to the heart of man. The thirst after pleasure devours us through life, gives rise to the useless anxieties of childhood, the guilty errors of youth, the ambitious and destructive practices of maturer age, and, in one word, both those crimes which justice punishes, and those which the world applauds. Every thing contributes to excite and keep up this thirst. What inducements are held out to the young to encourage them to overcome their repugnance to labour? The legitimate pleasures and enjoyments to be found at home or at college, and then the prospect of the great worldly advantages enjoyed by all men remarkable for talent and acquirements. When the young man has tasted the bitter joys of the world,

\* *Malita ipsa maximam partem veneni sui bibit.* Ep. lxxxi.

and discovered how delusive they are by an experience fatal at once to his virtue, health, and fortune, he finds himself under the spell of two fresh enchantments; the literary romance which creates heroic and blissful passions for the consolation of those whom the passions have degraded and plunged into despair, and the revolutionary romance, which tells him that the present state of society is the source of every misfortune, and that both his own interest and the general desire of mankind demand that he should labour to destroy it.

Amid this chorus of deceptive voices peopling the world with fanatical monsters, the religion of Jesus Christ alone labours to dispel our foolish illusions concerning life, and to usher us into the path of true happiness. To induce us to make a good use of the time and strength, which we waste in projects fatal alike to our own peace and to that of our brethren, it says to us: "*What will it profit a man to gain the whole of this world, which passeth away, and lose his own soul? Which of you can add to his stature one cubit, or to his life one minute of time?*" But if you have no power to alter your physical constitution, or to destroy the seeds of death which it contains; it is given to you to reform, and lengthen your moral life to an indefinite extent, to overcome your only real enemy—sin, and to heap up the only treasures you can take with you beyond the grave—your virtues and good works. Such is the task assigned you by the Almighty in this world; such is the only end of the preaching and sufferings of Jesus Christ; such is the source of the pure joys of the soul, *the perpetual feast of a good conscience*—in one word, such is the sole end of your existence, for at the tribunal which awaits you after death, rewards will be assigned to those only who have been victorious over their passions, so as to fulfil the great Commandment: "*Love God above all things, and your neighbours as yourselves.*" These are the lessons, which must be taught universally and perseveringly to children, to youths, to men in their prime, and to the old, if you desire them to become enlightened and virtuous, and *to go about doing good.*

But the unaided efforts of Religion cannot infuse these principles of true civilization into the generality of souls so as to influence morals; paternal and political authority must lend their assistance; nothing less than their joint endeavours can produce the unvarying exhibition of Christian example, Christian instruction, and Christian discipline, of which three things each is necessary for the proper education of man.

*Ques.*—Why do you place example before instruction?

*Ans.*—To follow the providential arrangements of our nature,

by which it is ordained that a child shall see long before he can listen, and feel before he can reason, and that his future career shall be greatly influenced by early impressions. Show, therefore, to him from the very beginning what you wish him later to love. I am sure no intelligent mother will contradict me, when I say that, by the time the mind of a child is capable of being enlightened by instruction, the education of the heart is far advanced.

Even when a man is fifteen, twenty, thirty, and sixty years of age, example has far more influence over him than words. Every day we may behold old men converted to a life of virtue by the example of their grand-children; but never, to my knowledge, do we behold children corrected by the words of those who have perverted them by bad example. Parents sometimes point out to you children, who, they say, are naturally incorrigible; they deceive themselves—such miserable beings are created by guilty or foolish parents, not by the Almighty. The good example of parents is the basis, the good example of masters and teachers the prop, and the good example of the higher classes, and, above all, of public characters, the crown work of that great edifice of knowledge and virtue, which causes nations to live and prosper. If you take away the crown work, the props and foundations, when assailed by storms, will soon totter and fall, and nought will remain but ruins reeking in blood. I proceed to Christian instruction.

*Ques.*—What do you mean by an *unvarying display of Christian instruction*? Must we then confine our studies to religious subjects, forbid profane sciences, and condemn the historical and literary masterpieces of Pagan antiquity as unworthy of our attention, according to the apparent plans of certain reformers of our educational systems?

*Ans.*—I mean that every branch of education ought to tend, directly or indirectly, to consolidate and develope in the soul of man a love for that religion to which we are indebted for being no longer slaves to senseless forms of worship and to barbarous institutions.

Any system of education, seeking to diminish rather than foster that love, would tend to conduct men into barbarism. But does it follow that therefore all profane sciences, and the study of pagan society, history, and literature are to be interdicted? Decidedly not; and I do not see that any of even the warmest partisans of a reformation in our classical studies have ever proposed anything of the kind. In the first place, if all

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sciences may be rendered profane by the vices of those who teach them, in like manner, no science is *profane* in itself, that is to say, foreign to Christianity and likely to draw men away from religion. Physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, physiology, anatomy, astronomy, etc., are all sound theology to a mind not wilfully blind, and lead directly to the God of the Gospel. (See Fact 1st.) The heavens and the earth fulfil so gloriously their office of *proclaiming the glory of their Creator*, that a careful study of them would be highly commendable, even were it not so important for our material interests.

With regard to pagan society, it is important to show it in its true light to young students, who otherwise would never be aware how much love and gratitude we owe to Christianity and to those generations of heroes who sacrificed their lives to insure its triumph; nor how they should from their hearts despise those pretended teachers who boast of the light which reason and human philosophy have thrown upon religious and social questions. The history of idolatrous nations, particularly of the Greeks and Romans, is quite as much as that of the Jewish people, the natural introduction to the history of the world regenerated by the Gospel.

A true picture of Paganism has two sides; one composed of all that is obscene and impure (and this must be carefully concealed from Christian youth), the other composed of every excess of cruelty and barbarity; and this cannot be placed in too strong a light. The scenes which it presents must appear so incredible to a youth brought up in the bosom of a Christian family, that it is advisable to bring forward the first writers of antiquity in attestation of its truthfulness. If we wish to form men who may combine elevation and solidity of thought with eloquence of expression, instead of men devoid alike of intellect and learning, we must let youths observe the unrivalled elegance of thought and language, the passionate love of literature, philosophy and of the fine arts, which were combined with the most cruel customs and the most atrocious laws; we must let them contemplate the spectacle of the most celebrated intellects of the day defending and celebrating institutions the barbarity of which makes us shudder. In this manner you can give Christian youth a taste for the literary, artistic and military master-pieces of the ancients, without exposing them to a fondness, even more pernicious than senseless, for the social virtues and policy of these immortal barbarians—a fondness which is too often strengthened by the imperfection of our classical

studies, as was lately observed by a writer, who cannot be suspected of any prejudices against Greek and Roman literature.\*

The study of the history and literature of both the ancient and the modern Pagans ought therefore to form a part of a good Christian education, as one of the surest means of filling the heart and mind of man with love for the law of Jesus Christ. By such means, the minds of the young may be prepared to receive and appreciate that portion of the Christian law which is most repugnant to nature, and which yet constitutes its civilizing power.

*Ques.*—To what do you allude?

*Ans.*—To the sacrifice which we must make of our boundless ambition and dearest inclinations before the shrine of our universal duties to God, to ourselves, and to all mankind; and before that of the particular duties of every age and state of life. This is what the Gospel preaches to all and each one of us. With regard to the advantages which each one will gain by performing all these duties, the Gospel informs us that they will be bestowed upon us in exact accordance with our deserts the moment after death.

The Christian religion, in order to induce us to bow our heads beneath her yoke, displays before our eyes the double spectacle of our Lord Jesus Christ, at once the Judge of the living and the dead, rendering to every one according to his works, and the Model of the elect giving us in his own person an example of the most painful sacrifices to duty.

Nature murmurs, but thus only can men be civilized; for they never become barbarians, and the enemies and oppressors of each other, but when they substitute their pretended rights for their real duties, and the spirit of self-gratification for the spirit of self-sacrifice.

\* "Our classical studies have filled our heads with proud maxims, derived from the authors of antiquity, concerning the gods, and concerning justice, duty, and liberty; and we sometimes think Catholic writers very severe in their judgments on a period when such noble sentiments were cultivated. We forget that all these maxims only regarded free men, and that the immense majority of mankind had no other duty than to obey their masters; and that as far as they were concerned, there were neither gods, justice, nor liberty. 'Let that slave be crucified.' 'But what crime has he committed? For pity's sake, allow a moment's delay; the life of a man being at stake.' 'What folly! is a slave a man? Very true, he has not committed any crime! . . . Let him be crucified—such is my will. I order him to be crucified, and my reason is, that such is my will.' Such was the power of a master among the ancients." M. F. Lallier, in an interesting article on the abolition of slavery, published by the Correspondent.



Let us now demonstrate, by examples chosen out of the various conditions of society, how mankind may be civilized.

Suppose, for instance, a royal child, whose mind has been prepared, by the example of those about him, to receive Christian truth. From his third up to his twentieth year his teachers all concur in instilling one single idea into his mind and heart : "The Eternal Monarch, before whom all people and kings are but dust, has stooped so low as to be born, to live, and to die like the poorest of men, in order to teach you the value of men, and how they ought to be governed. You, Prince, have great models for your imitation among your ancestors, but the Model of models is he who has judged your ancestors by his own life and law, and who will one day judge you also, as well as all your subjects."

You must perceive that the incessant reproduction of this idea under a thousand different forms, according to the intelligence and character of the royal pupil, would by no means be of any detriment, but rather of infinite service, in the study of many things proper for princes to learn. And in order that the courtiers of either sex may not overturn in a few days the work of twenty years, it is essential that, in the important affair of marriage, the welfare of the prince as a Christian should be consulted more than his political requirements as a sovereign ; for nothing tends more than a marriage, contracted on grounds purely political, to bring about the most lamentable and most impolitic result—namely, the corruption of the nation by the example of its ruler. When a woman has been selected who is calculated to maintain the prince in the paths of wisdom, and at once to perpetuate his race and his virtues, it is proper that both should, from time to time, unveil their inmost thoughts to the minister of religion, whose office it is to strengthen the weak and raise the fallen.

*Ques.*—I can agree to anything but confession !

*Ans.*—You ought to be aware that all besides is nearly useless without confession ; that is, without the happy necessity of well examining himself, at least once a year, on this question : "Am I a Christian, and were death to surprise me, could I hope to find mercy at the Judgment-seat of Christ ?"

Yes, here below, all men, and princes more than all others, must confess their sins. When a man does not confess his sins to a priest, his conscience is directed by himself, and by advisers who ruin his soul before God, before man, and before his own conscience. I am speaking of the method of education which produced princes like Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, and Louis IX. ;

and until I see proofs of the contrary, I prefer it to that method which produced men like Henry VIII. and Louis XV.

The same method must be followed for a child of the middle class, with this difference only, that he must above all be taught to appreciate and observe in our Divine Lord the manner of making a good use of knowledge and riches. Instead of saying to him: "Look upwards, my child, and following the example of such and such great men, strain every nerve to become prime minister, if not the Supreme Ruler of the nation," you must repeat to him over and over again, at home, at college, and at the university: "Look downwards, and behold the condition of nineteen-twentieths of thy brethren, and like the Son of the Most High, seek in learning, riches, and public offices only how thou mayest best assist the ignorant and the miserable to escape from their ignorance and misery. Thus thou wilt truly ennoble thyself and thy family—thou wilt obtain grace here, and glory hereafter."

The same method must be employed for the labourer and artisan. By inducing them to love their state of life, which was the one chosen by the Master of heaven and earth, the Supreme Judge of the living and the dead, we may teach them to find in it true dignity, and infinitely to ameliorate and ennoble it by the practice of every virtue. Do you not see that with rulers, citizens and populace thus formed by the influence of Christian virtues and doctrine, society would not only become civilized itself, but would diffuse true civilization around it, and that its state of civilization would continue improving to an unlimited extent, until each of its members entered the blessed society of heaven?

*Ques.*—Yes, and for this reason I think we might dispense with *Discipline*, a word likewise signifying *the rod*, which you named as necessary for the education of man.

*Ans.*—If looked upon in a proper light, there is nothing painful in the word *rod*. I do not think that wisdom is bestowed by the rod, but I say with the Scripture, that without it, wisdom cannot be infused, save with much difficulty, into the soul, and never will abide there. The body it is which nearly always offers opposition to the influence of word and example, let the rod therefore prepare the way! The body it is which stifles or effaces the effects of their influence in the soul, hold therefore the rod suspended over the body!

At every age, but principally in youth, men regard *pain* as the only evil, whereas it is but the *punishment* of evil. If therefore you wish to induce them to fly from evil, and to preserve them

from pain, you must have a system of punishment, formed in a Christian spirit, and applied with Christian firmness.

How many mothers would have spared their children unspeakable shame, and horrible, eternal torments, if they had known how to impose upon those little culprits small privations, and if necessary, small punishments ! How many more saints and heroes would there not be in every station of life, if there were many mothers who spoke to their children such language as that of Queen Blanche to her son : " I would rather see thee dead at my feet than proud, revengeful, greedy, idle, or disobedient ! " Great admiration is bestowed by young and old upon these words of the Spartan woman to her son when departing for the field of battle : " Never part from this shield—return with it, or upon it ! " I must say I far prefer the words of Queen Blanche. The Lacedemonians were the most warlike, but at the same time the most cruel of the Greek communities ; the pupil of Queen Blanche was the most humane of men, the most just of kings, and the most fearless of warriors.

Yes, it is indispensable to the honour and happiness of mankind, that discipline should be constantly maintained at home, at school, and in the country at large ; but it must be Christian ; that is to say, justice in distributing rewards and punishments must have no other end in view than the amendment—the good education of mankind.

And since men never could have furnished themselves with a system of education comprising to a suitable extent the three means of success—example, instruction, and discipline, we are now about to show that the Creator and Regenerator of mankind has supplied their necessity.

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### CHAPTER III.

*That by nature all men are Catholics, and can never cease being so without going against their nature.*

*Ques.*—Your proposition may be founded on truth, but I think the terms in which you express it are too decided.

*Ans.*—There can be nothing more decided than truth, the foundation of which rests upon God. Must not therefore the terms in which it is expressed be equally decided ? The whole of philosophy lies in this—to find a complete, that is to say, a decided form of expression for truth. But a truce to metaphysics, I proceed to facts.

Is it not true that in the north and the south, in the east and the west, in every degree of latitude and longitude, in every state of life, on the throne, in palaces, shops, and cottages, all men are born in utter ignorance of everything divine or human, absolutely incapable of bestowing upon themselves a religion which can teach them the end for which they are created, and impart to them a knowledge and a love of their duty ; that they are absolutely incapable of organising a state of society, which can provide them first with food and a cradle, and then with the thousand things which transform childhood into youth, and youth into manhood ?

Now tell me, is this entirely true, or is such the case only with the children of the middle ages, or with Catholic children ?

*Ques.*—Such a question can require no answer.

*Ans.*—You are deceived. Simple as the question may seem, you ought to know that, from the year 1520 to the year 1852, at least seven or eight hundred millions of men have been found in Europe, who have given a negative answer, and have maintained the truth of their decision by the pen, and by fire and sword ; and that even in the present day, armed multitudes demand for all and each individual, *their natural inalienable rights of examining the foundation on which religious, domestic, and political society rests.*

Is it not true, that children are everywhere, and always by nature condemned to know nothing of either religion or politics, but what they are taught ; and that they can neither invent doctrines, nor exercise any control over what is taught them ?

Is it not true, that, to form the minds and hearts of children, you must lay before them decided doctrines, not doubts ; and tell them that there is a God, what that God is, what he commands, and what he forbids ; how he will reward the virtuous and punish the wicked, etc. ?

Is it not true that all parents, whether Catholics, Protestants, or Free Thinkers, who are anxious about the education of their families, act in this manner ; and that they would consider themselves most guilty or imprudent if they followed any other method ?

How many Infidels and careless Christians imitate the Atheist, Diderot, who caused his daughter to learn her Catechism with the Curé ; how many think with the sceptic D'Alembert, that all children, *who despise the dogmas of faith, throw morality to the winds ?*

Have you any doubts concerning the necessity, and consequently the lawfulness of this method of bringing up children ?

*Ques.*—No ; for Infidels of eight or ten years of age would be either little monsters or idiots.

*Ans.*—You see then that up to the age of eight or ten, we are all of us Catholics by nature, and ought to be such according to universal opinion. Everything therefore in early education supposes society to be so well organised in all that concerns religion and policy, that a child has only to obey its laws, instead of pretending to have a right to remodel them.

From the age of ten to twenty years, do you think it would be advisable to change this method, either in the case of a child leaving school to enter service or work in the fields, or in the case of one entering college ? Should we inform the child, that everything he has learned at home may possibly be only a dream ; that all men are liable to error ; that it is time for him to examine his faith and morality by the light of reason ; be guided solely by that light, and believe only what appears to him clearly proved ; and that in regard to morality, he need observe only what he himself considers conformable to the principles of eternal justice ?

If the child should belong to one of those Protestant communions which preach *the right of private judgment* in interpreting the Bible, do you think it would be advisable for this young philosopher to examine and compare together the thirty-four thousand verses of the Bible, and for him to begin by deciding the ten thousand controversies concerning the mission and nature of Christ, his doctrines and institutions, which have distracted Protestant theologians for several ages ? If the child should be the son of Free Thinkers, who have no more respect for the Bible than for the Koran, do you think he ought to consider, whether there really is a God, or not ; whether all religions are alike good, or whether they are not all the offspring of folly and deception, whether he has a soul or not, and whether this soul is to serve the body or be served by it ?

Say now, are the intellectual and physical powers of children equal to such a task ? Would it be favourable to their education, their morals, or even their physical development ? Would it be favourable to the interests and wishes of their parents, whoever they may be ?

*Ques.*—Most decidedly not ; any young persons considering themselves capable of such a task would be monsters of pride, and enemies of every species of subordination. If this most guilty method has been in some degree followed in the system of public education, it is only fair to say that all parents, with-

out distinction of creed, have with one voice denounced it; and that its consequences call down a still louder condemnation.

*Ans.*—It is then acknowledged that nature and society require us to be Catholics until we are twenty. From the age of twenty to forty years, do the interests of each member of society call for a radical change in our system of promoting morality? Does that faith and do those practices which have hitherto been necessary to form enlightened minds and upright hearts, become utterly useless for the preservation of the knowledge and virtues already acquired? This is what we are about to see.

Let us suppose a young man who has been well brought up (that is to say, according to the Catholic system), about to begin life for himself; according to his rank, or the profession which he has chosen, he is henceforth to guide the plough, to wield the hammer, or some other implement of labour, to make use of those instruments which have been given into his hands with his doctor's cap, for the purpose of inflicting pain upon the human body in order to cure its diseases; to take up the pen, or exercise that magisterial authority, which is to decide the fate of so many families, or else to gird on the sword, and prepare to brave fatigues, privations, and death, by day and by night for the safety of his country, which in return promises him a little evanescent glory and a stinted allowance of food and clothing, do you think it would be wise and profitable to say to him: "Believe in God, or deny his existence; practise your religion, or leave it alone; the great point is to make your fortune?"

When a young man is about to enter the married state, would it be to his advantage or to that of the public, for him to become a Free Thinker, and follow the morality, which may be expressed in these words: "Take to yourself a wife, but live with another woman, and love yourself alone?"

When a maiden, who has been piously brought up, is about to be united to a man whom she thinks perfect, would it be advisable to recommend her to examine into her religious belief, fill her mind with doubts, and thus deprive herself of a spirit of prayer and filial confidence in God, who alone, when she finds she has been deceived, can console her, and give her grace to bring up children more virtuous than their father?

In short, would it be advisable to deprive man, in the fulness of his strength, when his passions are most ungovernable, of the torch which is to enlighten his path, and of the only means of restraining his appetites?

*Ques.*—Your questions give their own answer. No, it is not

amid the innumerable pre-occupations and temptations of manhood that you must say to a man : " Recommence your religious studies, and until you have completed them, listen only to the voice of your own mind and heart."

*Ans.*—Finally, would middle life and old age, that is to say, from forty to sixty or seventy, be the proper period for entertaining religious doubts? Is it only when life is slipping from our grasp, that we ought to learn what it is, and wherefore bestowed upon us? Is it only when the unceasing labours of death are destroying piece by piece, within and around us, the very props of our existence, that we are to cast a veil over the consoling prospects held out to us by Christianity, and say to ourselves : " My future abode and companions are the grave and worms, all the rest is mere conjecture ?"

What conclusion are we to draw from these considerations? That all men are Catholic by nature ; that the first necessity of their souls and even of their bodies is to find on their entrance into this world, a religion ready made ; a religion which spares them the labour of impossible examinations, which infuses into their hearts the knowledge and love of their duty, and which bears so clearly the seal of the Divinity, that they cannot contemplate it without faith. Now where can you find such a religion excepting in that great Church, the existence of which exhibits (as you have seen, fact 3rd), the most splendid and lasting of miracles ?

*Ques.*—Your deductions appear to me unanswerable, but with the obligation of believing in the Church, an obligation ever binding upon a Catholic, what becomes of liberty of thought, liberty of conscience, and liberty of examining for ourselves ?

*Ans.*—These various liberties become as great and perfect as they can be here below, *which* I am now about to prove.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*That liberty of thought, of conscience, and of examination is the fruit of submission to the Church, and that without such submission there is liberty only for the most unbridled ignorance, deceit, and despotism.*

*Ques.*—Your proposition is at variance with all received opinions.

*Ans.*—I hope to be able to prove that it has in its favour the evidence both of facts and of principles.

Liberty of thought in matters of religion requires in the first place a fund of religious knowledge, wherewith to feed thought, in the same manner as a person must have food in order to be at liberty to eat. Liberty of conscience implies the existence of a conscience, that is to say, a perception and feeling of certain moral truths, which may serve to regulate our judgment. Liberty of examination, in like manner, requires matter on which to work, and light to guide its steps. If you once take away from the mind the elementary truths of religion and morality, there is no longer any possibility of liberty of thought, of conscience, and of examination upon such subjects. The mind must remain in the obscurity of doubt and the darkness of ignorance.

Liberty of thought, of conscience, and of examination requires that in the teaching of those capital truths which are to serve as matter for the labours of the mind and conscience, we should run no risk of being deceived by our teachers, for if our first ideas are false, we should only enjoy the melancholy liberty of erring in our thoughts and judgments upon the most important points. The more we are convinced of the truth of our first principles, the greater will be our liberty to think, judge, and examine.

Such being the case, it is plain that the Catholic enjoys liberty of thought, conscience, and examination in an eminent degree, since he possesses in the teaching of the Church a body of truths, which throw light upon the past, the present, and the future, and open a boundless horizon for the activity of his mind, and the heavings of his heart.

*Ques.*—Yes; it may be said, a Catholic is free to think, judge and examine, but only so far as he does not overstep the limits assigned by the definitions of the Church; whereas the liberty of the Protestant and of the philosopher is bounded only by the decisions—for the one, of his reason enlightened by the Bible; for the other, of his unaided reason.

*Ans.*—Your expression that Catholics enjoy liberty of thought and judgment only within the limits marked by the definitions of the Church, is scarcely correct. Has the Church ever undertaken to assign limits to the thoughts of her children, and say to them: "Behold the point, beyond which you are forbidden to push your investigations?" On the contrary, she exhorts them to penetrate farther and farther into the knowledge imparted by faith, and to raise their minds and hearts without



ceasing to the contemplation of the eternal truths. What are her doctrinal decisions? Rays of light, which by dispersing the clouds of error and uncertainty hanging over an article of the doctrines of Christ, render that article clearer, give solidity to our thoughts on those points where they waver, and thus prevent us from becoming, like the dupes of heresy, *children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.\** The articles of faith defined by the Church, as expressing the faith of all ages, and the real meaning of the words of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, are therefore not limits, but landmarks and lighthouses to guide our steps, in the study of the supernatural world revealed to us by the Gospel. Whenever reflected upon and examined, they are fruitful sources of light, which serve to increase religious thought, and feed pious affections.

It is because they possess not these elementary and cardinal truths, without which the labours of the mind become a mere wandering of the imagination, that the Protestant and the Rationalist philosopher are condemned, according to the words of St. Paul, *to be sick about questions and strifes of words, ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth.†* The Protestant says proudly: "The basis of my religious investigations is most wide and solid; it is the Bible, which contains the Word of God." But is the whole Bible undoubtedly the pure Word of God, and which of its thirty-four thousand verses furnishes you with a key to the rest, and with the first article of the doctrine of Jesus Christ? These are the two wide questions, which you must have decided before you can know what to think, and what judgment to give, on any religious subject. Till then, you must be weighed down by doubt and ignorance, and you cannot boast of your liberty of thought in matters of religion, without outraging common sense.

The philosopher says: "My liberty of thought is bounded only by the definitions of reason." Has your reason defined whether there is a God, whether you have an immortal soul, or whether there is a moral law to regulate your actions in reference to God and to your fellow creatures; and in what that law consists? You must give a clear and immediate solution to these problems, which have been examined into by philosophers with very small success for nearly thirty centuries, if you desire

\* Ephesians, iv. 14.

† 1st Timothy, vi. 4; 2nd, iii. 7.

your liberty of thought in matters of religion to be anything more than the liberty to live without any religious thought, or any moral rule.

Do you now understand that liberty of thought, conscience, and examination in matters of religion is inseparable from religious conviction, and that, consequently, it cannot be found without the pale of that Church, which is evidently divine, and which alone can command faith and bestow immovable conviction?

*Ques.*—I can understand that free thinkers, whether Protestants or philosophers, if they remain faithful to their principle of adhering only to the definitions of their reason, would ever be plunged in all the perplexities of doubt, considering that it will probably be the end of ages before either Biblical or Philosophical reason gives immutable definitions on religious subjects. But it appears that in practice, these individuals remain pretty well satisfied with the Christian or anti-Christian definitions, which they find ready made, either in the religious sect to which they belong, or in the philosophical school which they frequent.

*Ans.*—Yes, and this fact is a confirmation of what I have proved in the last chapter, that we are all born Catholics, inclined to believe that the true religion did not wait for the time of our birth, to reveal itself to man, and that God has not placed us in this world to unravel the mysteries of the Bible, or to invent a system of philosophy unshackled by errors or mysteries.

The principle of heretical and philosophical Rationalism: *Regard nothing as true but what is proved to be so by your reason*, is an absurdity which pride may adopt to rid herself of truths displeasing to her, but which nature rejects. Truth and error, orthodox faith, and heretical as well as anti-Christian opinions, all are traditional; men invent nothing new. The schismatic, the heretic, and the infidel philosopher, are such only through their credulity, that is to say, through the thoughtless credence they give to their teachers. Nothing can be more evident. If the schismatic Churches of the East have kept during the last eight centuries, sixty million Christians enslaved to the most wretched anti-Catholic prejudices; if, in the West of Europe, and in North America, there are yet twenty-five or thirty million Protestants more or less attached to the doctrines of Luther and of Calvin, and to the Anglican doctrines of Queen Elizabeth, what has been, and what is still the cause? That ministers and people, fathers and governors have, by unanimous consent, continued to employ the Catholic method of teaching by

authority, and making use of more or less vigorous measures against the enemies of official teaching.

With regard to the thousands of self-styled independent sects, which have abandoned the Orthodox Greco-Russian Church, the Orthodox Lutheran Church, the Orthodox Calvinist Church, or the Orthodox Anglican Church, in order to form separate communions, what preserves their existence? Their faith in the doctrines of their founders.

What have been, and what are the little flocks of free thinkers who have been sufficiently united to form a species of school, in Germany, France, Italy, and elsewhere? They have been, and still are the faithful followers of Kant, Fichte, Goëthe, Voltaire, Rousseau, or any man of talent, who has taught them not to discuss, but to forget, despise, and travesty the philosophy of the Gospel.

In this manner is the law of the Author of nature necessarily fulfilled, a law which requires that man should be taught by his fellow man, and which leaves him only liberty to choose between being taught truth and being taught error. Thus is the law of the God of justice necessarily fulfilled, a law which condemns minds rebellious to the salutary teaching of the divinely appointed Church, to believe errors imposed upon them by hateful deceivers. Do you not in fact see, that liberty of thought, in the anti-Catholic sense, causes the immense majority of mankind to become the slaves of the most unrestrained intellectual despotism?

*Ques.*—Yes, considering the necessity of believing what we are taught, and our inability for the most part to exercise any control over the lessons given us, it is evident, that entire liberty of thought and of preaching our thoughts must, in the hands of the proud and the visionary, be in reality power to deceive and enslave the bulk of mankind.

*Ans.*—Facts likewise prove that such is the case. How great an oppressor of souls was that eunuch Photius, whose satanic pride drew three parts of the Christians of the East into schism, and filled their minds so effectually with his calumnies and furious rage against the Church of all nations, that his dupes still repeat in the nineteenth century the motto they adopted in the fourteenth and fifteenth: "Rather Turks than Catholics!"

Again, what despots were the authors and inventors of the religious orgies of the sixteenth century, who, in order to satisfy their pride, lust, and covetousness, invented religions worthy of Mahomet, both by the fatalism of their dogmas, and by the barbarian-like mode in which they preached their views of the

Gospel! How great is the servility of the Lutheran, Anglican, and Calvinist flocks, who forget the professions of faith of their *glorious* Reformers, but are most persevering in accusing the Catholic universe of adoring the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, of denying the merits of our Redeemer, of selling indulgences and remission of sin, of forbidding the use of the Bible, and twenty other similar absurdities, taken word for word from the writings of Luther and Calvin!

To conclude. Liberty of thought, conscience, and examination will be perfect and entire in Heaven alone, when, *seeing light in the light of God*,\* and truth in its Eternal Centre, we shall be for ever freed from the darkness of ignorance, the perplexities of doubt, and the seductions of error.

Here below, the only true liberty of thought in matters of religion is that which was defined by the Deliverer of mankind in the following terms: *If you continue in my word, he said to the Jews, you shall be my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*† Now, the Son has freed the world from the slavery of error, only by the creation and preservation, during the course of eighteen centuries, of the Catholic Church, which has dispersed the dark visions of the corruptors of the word of Jesus Christ, confounded the proud claims of power, genius, birth, and riches, and caused the most talented minds to bow in submission to the same faith and the same duties, or rather has raised the poor and humble to that sublimity of knowledge and of virtue which forms heroes and saints.

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## CHAPTER V.

*On what the pretended right of free examination in social and religious matters rests, and how it terminates.*

*Ques.*—Again you are speaking of the dearest right of modern Liberalism, a right which you probably intend to annihilate.

*Ans.*—Yes, for this right annihilates, at one and the same time, the rights of God and of mankind; it is founded upon the ruins of that religion which has civilized the world, and it delivers up the people, soul and body, to the tender mercies of a multitude of gods and goddesses far worse than those whose altars were overturned by Christianity.

\* Psalm xxxv. 10.

† John viii. 32—36.

*Ques.*—It is possible that the *abuse* of the right of religious discussion may destroy religion, but I do not see how the right in itself involves that effect.

*Ans.*—You soon will see. Religion is *religion*, that is to say, a law binding upon the conscience, only so far as we believe it divine; for, not to say that God alone can bind the conscience, by religion we mean all those duties which God imposes upon us. A human religion, that is to say, one invented by men who impose upon us their will for that of God, is absurd, impious, and a crime against the divine sovereignty and against mankind. Now, a religion believed to be divine is, by that very fact, above all discussion. We do not discuss our convictions: we do not dispute against God. To believe, and to discuss, are as much at variance with each other as yes and no. To discuss a matter implies doubt, and where doubt exists faith is excluded.

A Catholic nation, that should place among the rights of a citizen the liberty of publicly discussing religious and social matters, and the freedom of each individual to publish his own notions on such subjects, would thereby declare three things—1st, that it had ceased to believe in the divinity of the Catholic Church and in the excellency of the moral precepts which she lays down as the basis of society; 2ndly, that it expected to receive from each citizen, capable of preaching or holding a pen, some new lights to guide it in deciding whether to retain the Catholic faith, or to try some new religion better suited to the state of the public mind; 3rdly, that till the final decision, all men were free to think and practise whatever they considered best.

Would not that be, as I said, destroying at one blow the rights of God and of mankind, the very basis of Christian civilization, and holding out an invitation to propagandists of barbarism?

*Ques.*—It may be said that true religion loses nothing by examination; that the right of discussion implies a right of defence as well as of attack; and that after all, the liberty of the press, like the lance of Achilles, heals the wounds it inflicts.

*Ans.*—These grand expressions conceal great errors.

Christianity, considered in itself, has certainly nothing to fear from our discussions. Whatever may be the ideas men form upon it, Jesus Christ remains eternally the absolute sovereign of heaven and earth, and his law, the unchangeable law of mankind. If we range against him in battle array all his enemies, who, from Julian the apostate down to Proudhon, have said: "*Let us spurn and crush the infamous Galilean!*" if we cause the young to take pleasure in, and repeat these

favourite words of the German Voltaire—Goëthe : “ There are four things for which I have an equal detestation—snuff, bells, bugs, and Christianity ; ” still we shall not prevent believers, infidels, and blasphemers from appearing without exception before the tribunal of Christ, there to hear pronounced one of these two sentences : *Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you . . . .* or, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire ! . . . .* By rendering the Catholic Church hateful in the eyes of her own children, we shall not take away from her those marks of divine origin which are venerated by two hundred millions of men ; neither shall we prevent her from converting to her faith in one year more souls than we shall deprive her of in two.

Liberty to attack Catholicism will not therefore destroy it throughout the universe, but it may ruin it in one kingdom, and there substitute the horrors of barbarism for the blessings of civilization.

The true religion, the Catholic religion, is precisely the one, which ignorance and vice are the most eager to examine, that is to say, to calumniate, villify, and outrage.

*Ques.*—Yet Catholicism has been established, and has spread in defiance of the most furious and persevering assaults, and the blood shed by its members has but strengthened its cause.

*Ans.*—Yes ; but do not forget the explanation I have given of this supernatural fact (Fact iii., ch. 1). It is not usual for Heaven to renew those miracles by which Christianity was established in the heart of an idolatrous universe, in favour of a nation about to apostatize from the faith. After having vainly warned, punished, and threatened it by the voice of men powerful in word and work, the Master says : “ This nation rejects my mercy, let it therefore serve as a monument of my justice ! ”

You said that liberty of discussion implies a right of defence as well as a right of attack. Yes ; but supposing that it was as easy to efface a calumny or an objection as to start it (which is not the case), who are the judges in the public discussion ? The public, that is to say, the bulk of the people. Let me beg you to reflect upon the two following principles :

*Men are by nature condemned to believe whatever they are unceasingly taught.*—When they behold on one side the austere line of conduct marked out for them by their duty ; and on the other, the flattering doctrine of their pretended rights, their moral weakness speedily causes them to incline to the latter, and reject the former.

Experience does not permit us to doubt the truth of these principles. Observe the effect that has been produced in France, and is at present produced in Piedmont, by the almost unrestrained liberty of the press. In both countries immense sacrifices have been made to support those newspapers and publications which are pledged to defend religion. Talent, self-devoted editorship, influential patronage, nothing has been wanting to them, excepting readers. The most fortunate have had scarcely one-tenth part as many subscribers as those papers which were the most hostile to Catholic faith and institutions. These latter have become the very despots of the public mind, and despots most inconceivably tyrannical.

In some parts men speak with admiration, and in others with terror, of the influence of the Catholic Hierarchy. But what are all the means of influence possessed by a Pope, who sends forth a doctrinal bull barely once in ten years, by a bishop who publishes one or two pastoral letters in the course of a year, or by a priest who preaches once a week to his congregation, and is obliged to go on repeating over and over again doctrines most repugnant to nature ; what are, I say, all these means of influence compared with those of the popes of public literature, who bestow upon their flocks three hundred and sixty doctrinal bulls in the year, filled with everything most calculated to inflame the coldest mind and the most unimpassioned heart ?

Take for instance one newspaper that is famous for the number of times it has changed sides ; there is not a single cause which it has not served, deserted, and combatted ; for the space of twenty years, its very existence has been made up of contradictions, calumnies, and impudent lies. I ventured to say to one of its subscribers, who was otherwise an intelligent man : " How can you, who are an honest and sensible man, continue to read this paper ? " " But this paper has so great a respect for religion, and only attacks its abuses ; I have subscribed to it for twenty years, and it possesses one rare good quality, that of remaining faithful to its principles, and of never uttering an untruth ! " I have frequently made an experiment of this kind, and my question has always received some such answer.

No words can express how great are the powers of fascination and stupefaction possessed over its constant readers by a newspaper that has the talent of embellishing error and flattering the passions. It deceives and bewilders them ; it exasperates, arms, and fills them with fury against all those men and things

that have the misfortune to be at variance with it. I said, a few pages back, that liberty of religious discussion enslaved the people, body and soul, to innumerable deities far more merciless than those from whom we have been delivered by Christianity, and perhaps you then suspected me of exaggeration.

*Ques.*—Yes; and so I do still.

*Ans.*—Do you? The gods of Homer and Virgil were subject to great vices, and, when opportunity offered, they even committed great crimes; but on the other hand, they possessed some invaluable virtues, among others, the one of always preserving silence. They were satisfied with the incense and victims offered to them upon certain days, and required nothing more, allowing men to live according to their ancient laws and hereditary customs, which were, it is true, tainted with barbarous egotism, but yet maintained an order of things infinitely preferable to anarchy.

This is not the case with the gods of the pen, who daily impose the law of their ideas and passions upon thirty or forty thousand slaves, each of whom acts as an echo to repeat the words of their master in every direction. Religious and political convictions, respect for all laws divine and human, Christian and social virtues, love of home, country, or friends, nothing can stand against this running fire of sophistry, blasphemy, sarcasm, lying erudition, perfidious insinuations, calumnious facts, shameful accusations, disgusting anecdotes, and obscene articles.

For newspapers to cure the wounds they inflict, as you said, it would be necessary for the bulk of the subscribers to read both sides of the question; and even then, as there are few minds capable of discerning truth from falsehood amid the chaos of contradictory doctrines, the consequence would be that all doctrines alike would be despised. But the newspaper is a jealous intolerant-god, and an enemy of anything like division. Its first precept is: *Thou shalt hear and adore me alone*. And it is obeyed. The souls of its subscribers are most truly its creatures. It makes them live in its life, and transports them into a world of its own. It instructs them in a new universal history of mankind, as regards religion, politics, and literature; it casts a dark veil over events beaming with light, and substitutes obscure, doubtful anecdotes coloured by fancy. It works an entire change in the annals of the country, disparages and blackens every fair fame, whitewashes the foulest characters, and reviles all institutions.

After having saturated its followers with contempt and



hatred for all the realities of the past and the present, this new god introduces them to its views of the future. Nothing here resists its will; therefore it traces the plan of a model society, and creates an abode of delights where all tears are wiped away, under the holy laws of liberty, equality, and fraternity. And when it has inflamed the hearts of its followers with passionate love for this Eden, it proceeds to say: "Do you desire this dream of happiness to be realised? Let all the enemies of an odious past and intolerable present unite, take up arms, and prepare a funeral pile for the old world, for all its oppressors and admirers; and remember that it is only by passing through the Red Sea that you can enter the promised land!" Now tell me, in presence of Europe, which so lately shuddered, and trembles yet, at the prospect of a general massacre by armies of savages, did I exaggerate when I said that the right of discussing everything created a more brutalising and sanguinary idolatry than that from which the Gospel has delivered us? And for the benefit of whom, may I ask, is this excessive despotism (to which Asiatic despotism is but a name), this degrading idolatry, set on foot? Among all the publishers who ruled the revolutionary masses in France about the year 1848, you will not find one conspicuous for literary or scientific merit, while at least three parts of their number had figured in the rolls of the police, of the assizes, and even of the jail. One newspaper now taking a most prominent part in revolutionising and demoralising Piedmont, is edited by a wretch, who gives vent in the grossest and most violent language to the Anti-catholic rage, which, together with his being, he is said to have derived from a wicked priest. Another newspaper, high in favour, emanates from the pen of a refugee, who has been forced to write volumes in answer to the public accusation of having been banished from his country for theft.

And it is into the hands of such unclean monsters that the political, moral, and religious life of a nation is delivered up; and this is styled *constitutional rights* and *national liberty*!

*Ques.*—I yield to the proofs you have brought forward. But how can you restrict the liberty of religious opinion without also affecting liberty of worship?

*Ans.*—Allow me, in the first place, to beg you to observe that there is a huge difference between permitting each individual to have his own religious opinions, and permitting him to publish them. There is no necessity for the former to be allowed or protected by the law. Who can prevent you from forming your own religious opinions, and feeding with them your imagination

and mind, until the Eternal Truth deigns to infuse light into your soul, and show you how far your ideas have been correct, or how far false? But to publish your religious opinions is not only an outward, public act, and consequently subject to the supervision of the social authorities, it is, as we have just seen, an exercise of authority, by which you dictate to the very consciences of your readers, to those consciences which your opinions may pervert, lead astray, deceive, and seduce into the most fatal irregularities. No wise and good government, therefore, can give, or even tolerate, in each of its subjects, unlimited freedom to publish and preach his social and religious opinions.

It is much the same as regards liberty of worship. Various forms of worship are, no doubt, a great misfortune, and those individuals who aimed the first blow at religious unity were most criminal. But political good sense, as also morality, requires that all those who have been brought up in any one of these various religions, and consider it to be true and lawful, should be able to practise it without obstacle. The interests of religious unity itself require that it should not be rendered hateful by civil intolerance. Therefore, in those countries where various religions are already established, a Catholic legislator can say, without giving proof of religious indifference, "All existing forms of worship may be freely practised." But no prudent legislator ought to say, "Every individual is at liberty to introduce and practise whatever religion he pleases." He may answer those who claim such a right, in the words of Napoleon to the emissary of the celebrated Pitt, who was recommending him to establish in France *a religion of his own*:—"Make a religion of my own!" he replied, with a smile. "To make a religion, it would be necessary for me to ascend Mount Calvary, which I have no wish whatever to do. But if such a scheme suits Pitt, let him carry it out himself; it is not at all to my taste."\*

Yes, in order to be privileged to change among Christian nations, that religion which was founded by the Blood of Calvary, and by the blood of millions of martyrs; that religion which has twice delivered Europe from barbarism, has built nearly all its cities, and tilled its plains, it would be necessary for the innovator to have shed his blood, to have undergone much toil for the good of mankind, or at least to have built one village, and cultivated a few barren acres. As the inventors of religions and the founders of new societies never dream of any

\* *Hist. Univ. de l'Eglise Catholique*, by the Abbé Rohrbacher. Book XCI. vol. xxviii.

thing of the kind, and as, instead of cultivating barren deserts, they rather discover a tendency to transform fair countries into dreary solitudes, political good sense cannot avoid saying to them: "Since you are capable of creating religions and new forms of society—there lies a desert country, I will furnish you with tools and every material for providing food and shelter; go, and make trial of your theories; but beware of ever returning hither, otherwise! . . . . ."

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## CONCLUSION

OF THE FIRST BOOK, AND CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FOUR FACTS.

Let us pause for an instant, and fix our attention upon the three hundred million men who come into this world, live, and die, in the course of each century.

The insignificant varieties of height and colour which induced some frivolous writers of the last century to renew the pagan idea of there being several species of men, will not prevent us from perceiving the seal of unity stamped upon the moral and physical constitution of each and all of these travellers upon earth. *All men have one entrance into life, and the like going out.\** During the course of the short journey which they make from their mother's womb, where their body is formed, to the grave, where it falls to decay, we may observe in them the same wants, the same desires, and the same useless efforts to escape the former and satisfy the latter. Those who have not acquired the peace of the soul through the Word of Jesus Christ, are in eager pursuit of that happiness for which they crave, but can never attain, and consequently they are ever in a state of feverish agitation. Some, thirsting for pleasure, plunge into every excess; others, passionately desirous of riches or glory, here heap up mountains of gold and merchandise, there multiply their studies, and elsewhere eagerly conquer kingdom after kingdom. But what they actually do is nothing compared to what they intend to do; for, in fact, a life four times the length of that of Mathusalem, would not be long enough to fulfil the desires of one single man. As the void in their souls increases in proportion to their efforts to fill it, and *mourning taketh hold of the end of joy,†* they become filled with irritation and jealousy, accuse each other of deceit, and tear one another to pieces. Even when the phantom

\* Wisdom vii. 6.

† Proverbs xiv. 13.

of happiness does not cause them to engage in mortal combat on the battle field, the giant spectre Death is not the less sure to visit each individual, and reduce all to the same level in the grave.

Reflect upon this spectacle, and you will, I think, acknowledge that the human species is a something that cannot be defined unless we accept the definition given by Catholic philosophy: *Mankind is a family destined to a superior state of existence, for which this life is but a preparation; this family has, however, gone astray from the beginning, and Jesus Christ came from Heaven to guide it into the right path.*

If you carefully observe the inclinations and powers of these travellers upon earth, you will see that they all proclaim and demand the existence of these three facts: an Universal God, an Universal Christ, or Redeemer, and an Universal Church, and that their consciences give the lie to whatever their mouths may assert to the contrary.

I. *All men proclaim and demand the Existence of an Universal God.* In the first place, the human body, by its organisation, proclaims an Universal God. Of all bodies endowed with life, it is the only one which has connection with all physical beings, has dominion over them, and can make them subservient to its wants. This property of our organism attracted the attention of ancient philosophers, particularly of Aristotle, who defined man to be a *little universe (microcosmos)*, of Cicero, who, in his Second Book on the *Nature of the Gods*, has given us a magnificent description of the human body; and of Galien, who expressed his feelings by cries of admiration when studying this masterpiece of the Almighty. Those great men, if they had not read the sacred volume, seem to have guessed what the 26th verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis tells us; "*God said: Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion, etc.*"

The human mind proclaims and demands the existence of an Universal God. Without waiting for proof, the thought of God occupies the very centre of our souls, *it is the light enlightening every man that cometh into this world*; the light which may be veiled, but never extinguished by the clouds of passion. No sooner do we wish to explain the fact of our existence, or that of any other being, than our minds turn naturally to the Eternal God, as affording the only possible explanation. Without going in direct opposition to the voice of our consciences, we cannot turn a deaf ear to the universal cry of Nature, of plants, of animals, and of the *great Army of the Heavens*. (See Fact 1st.)

It is true that men long adored, and many still adore private or national deities, who have nothing in common with the God of the Universe; but that is the work of the passions in a state of delirium, against which *the naturally Christian souls* of the idolators, as Tertullian observes, never cease protesting.\*

The human heart, above all, proclaims and demands an Universal God. What does this heart demand, this heart which no riches, glory, or pleasure, can satisfy? It demands *infinitude*. It demands that God should fulfil his promise to the father of all believers: *I am thy reward infinitely great*; † it says to him, with David: *I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear*. ‡

II. *All men proclaim and demand an Universal Redeemer*. The ancients were unanimous in their expectation of a Heavenly Envoy who would re-establish on earth the reign of justice and peace. This expectation, which was preached by Socrates to his disciples, was spoken of by Virgil in his poetry.§ Ever since the end of the first century of the Christian Era, half the world has never ceased adoring in the person of Jesus Christ the true Mediator between God and man. Non-Christian nations have also their divinely inspired teachers; the Mussulmen have their Prophet; the Chinese their Confucius; the Hindoos their Krischna; in the North of Asia an incarnate God is adored in the Grand Lama; and finally, even unbelievers have their great men, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Goëthe, etc., whom they regard as so many lights of the world and Christs of eternal Reason. With one voice, therefore, does the universe proclaim the necessity of some Representative of the Almighty, of reason, and of nature, who, by dispelling the errors which distract the human race, may assemble all mankind beneath the standard of Truth, one and indivisible, so that nothing may

\* "Are you desirous that we should prove the existence of God . . . by the testimony of the soul itself, which, notwithstanding its imprisonment in the body, notwithstanding prejudice and evil education, notwithstanding the tyranny of the passions, and the slavery of false gods, when it awakes, so to speak, from a state of inebriety, or from deep sleep, when it recovers, as it were, its health, invokes God under the only title really suitable to him: *Great God! Good God! What pleases God?* Such language is on the lips of every one. The soul likewise acknowledges him to be her Judge by expressions such as these: *God sees all; I place my trust in God; God will repay me*. O wonderful testimony, rendered by a naturally Christian soul! And speaking thus, it looks not towards the Capitol, but towards Heaven; it knows that there is the throne of God, and that it is from thence it has derived its own existence, since that existence is derived from God."—Apology, chap. xvii.

† Genesis xv. 1.

‡ Psalm xvi. 15.

§ See in Plato, *the Second Dialogue of Alcibiades*, and in Virgil, the fourth eclogue, *Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna*.

remain but to distinguish the true Universal Redeemer among so many pretenders. This no longer presents any difficulty; for the pretended Representatives of God, of nature, and of reason, speedily fade away in the presence of the author of the Revelation of the Gospel. We must either acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Redeemer of mankind, or we must deny God and humanity itself, and rank our Divine Lord in the list of celebrated impostors, a line of conduct which even the unbeliever will not presume to follow unless blinded by ignorance or rage.

III. *The human conscience proclaims and demands the existence of an Universal Church.* Even previous to reading in the Gospel that Jesus Christ has established a body of Ministers of his word, whose office is to unite all mankind in *one fold, under one shepherd*, conscience informs each individual that the Son of God, who was made man, and was crucified for the Redemption of the world, cannot have left his work imperfect, but must have taken measures to make all men partakers of the Redeeming virtue of his Word and of his Blood. Conscience informs each individual that he cannot have confided to a book of any sort, and, above all, to a book such as the Bible, the office of converting the world; and those even who do attribute to him so extravagant an idea, daily give the lie to their own words by creating Churches and societies for the Propagation of the Bible-Religion, and tracts to explain it.

Finally, the Universal Church is not an abstract idea, but the most colossal fact that can be contemplated by the eye of man. It exists with its thrice divine mark of Unity—a miracle, ever impossible, humanly speaking, and yet ever subsisting; a permanent miracle, comprising thousands of other miracles; a miracle to which all eyes, that do not fear the light, must be attracted; a miracle which defies all explanations, grinds into dust all the sophisms of schismatics, heretics, and unbelievers, and condemns them either to be silent, or to speak language devoid of sense. (See Fact 3rd.)

Thus it is that by unanswerable logic, the three first facts of the Existence of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the Catholic Church, in close connexion with each other, and with the fourth fact—the Existence of man, give a basis to the Philosophy of the Catholic Catechism, which, although no doubt in some degree open to the insults and contempt of ignorant incredulity, may defy all the efforts of human science.

We are about to examine, in the two following Books, the edifice which rests upon this immovable basis—I mean *the*

*Apostles' Creed and the Commandments of God and the Church.*  
The former is the Polar star, the latter are the Charts given by Heaven to those *men of good will* who are sailing on the dark ocean of life, with no other guide than the untruthful compass of human reason, and the deceptive rudder of a will governed by passion.

END OF BOOK I.

## BOOK II.

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“Is it not time for the Divine philosophy of faith to supersede faith in human philosophy?”

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### THE APOSTLES' CREED.

*Ques.*—What is the Apostles' Creed?

*Ans.*—A compendium of the chief truths which a Christian has to believe, agreed upon by the Apostles themselves, and intended for a *rule* or *standard*, both to the clergy in preaching, and to the laity in professing, the Gospel faith. Hence it is called the *symbol*, which word etymologically means at once an *agreement* and a *standard*.

In the religious system, the Creed or Symbol is the foundation and the preamble of the Divine Law. It unfolds to us the claims God has on our obedience, and the powerful motives we have for observing the commandments, and for fulfilling our duty, so as to acquire a right to the inestimable rewards promised by our heavenly Father to all who keep his law.

“It comprises,” says one of our most able Catechists, “the history of the world, or rather of religion, from the creation of the universe to the end of ages—two distant periods connected by a chain of mysteries, which the faithful soul, borne aloft, like a soaring eagle, upon the wings of faith and hope, must fixedly contemplate, undazzled by the abyss of difficulties, beheld yawning beneath by the weak eye of human reason.”\*

*Ques.*—How do you divide the Apostles' Creed?

*Ans.*—First, into four parts, of which the before-named Catechist writes as follows: “The first part contains what we are to believe concerning the Person of God the Father, and the work of Creation; the second what we are to believe concerning God the Son and the work of Redemption; the third what we

\* *Cours complet de doctrine Chrétienne, contenant le Catéchisme de Bourges, et l'explication du Catéchisme de l'Empire, nouv. édit.* Lyon, 1844, tom. I. p. 26.



are to believe concerning the Holy Ghost and the work of Sanctification ; the fourth, what we are to believe concerning the Church and the work of Glorification." \* These four parts are themselves comprised in twelve articles, each of which will form a chapter of this book, and be sub-divided into as many paragraphs as may be found convenient.

## ARTICLE I.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.*

### I.—I BELIEVE.

*Ques.*—What is to believe ?

*Ans.*—To *believe* is to receive the truths which Jesus Christ teaches us by his Church, with so firm a conviction as to regard all contrary opinions as undoubtedly false, and to be ready by God's grace to die, rather than deny or even dissemble our belief in those truths, whenever God's glory, or our neighbour's salvation imperatively demand a profession of faith.

*Ques.*—May not such a conviction degenerate into fanaticism ?

*Ans.*—It would certainly be fanaticism in a professed heretic, or in a Rationalist philosopher ; but in a well instructed Catholic, it is simply the effect of God's grace united to man's common sense. As the reason of this difference arises from what we have proved in the first volume, and in the preliminary questions, I shall describe it now as briefly as possible.

A professed heretic is one who, although acquainted with the Church founded by our blessed Lord, refuses to hearken to her voice, and says : " I must by myself discover what Jesus Christ has taught." Were such a man to say, after reading the Bible, " It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what may be at present believed by three hundred million Christians, or what was believed by fourteen or fifteen hundred millions of my ancestors ; I have the conviction that I have found true Christianity in the Bible, and I will die rather than acknowledge that I can have been deceived "—it is evident that the pride of such a man would border on fanaticism.

The same would be the case with the Rationalist philosopher

\* *Cours complet de doctrine Chrétienne, contenant le Catéchisme de Bourges, et l'explication du Catéchisme de l'Empire, nouv. édit. Lyon, 1844, tom. i. p. 26.*

who should think that he had solved problems which have puzzled the philosophical world for near three thousand years, and say: "The light which is to enlighten the world is at length revealed, in my person!"

More than once, no doubt, heresiarchs and leaders of Anti-christian philosophy have fallen into these contemptible excesses of self-confidence; nevertheless it must be said that the majority have distinguished themselves more by fickleness, than by obstinate adherence to any particular dogma, and have been *humatics* rather than *fanatics*; as the Scripture says: *The fool is changed like the moon.* \*

As regards a well instructed Catholic, how can you expect his faith to waver, supported as it is by light from above, and founded on the immoveable rock of the Catholic Church, the impregnable strength of which you have yourself recognised in the first volume.

*Ques.*—You say that faith is supported in the first place by light from above, and is a gift of God; may not that serve as an excuse for infidels?

*Ans.*—Yes, faith is a supernatural gift. In fact, what can be more directly opposed to our cowardly and sensual nature than a disposition to believe things which, so far from flattering the senses, are repugnant to all our earthly inclinations, and to adhere to this belief with such tenacity as to sacrifice our very lives rather than abandon it? To produce such effects, is it not necessary that a brighter light should shine on the mind than that of merely natural conviction, and the heart be attracted by something superior to its natural bias in favour of truth? That faith is a supernatural gift is therefore less a mysterious dogma than an evident fact in the cases both of believers and of unbelievers. Whoever says that he cannot believe, or understand how others can believe, proves that such is really the case.

But is this an excuse for unbelievers? No. Let us leave to Calvinistical and Jansenistical theologians the care of inventing dogmas and mysteries (which have uniformly been rejected by the Church) concerning grace and predestination.

The everlasting principles of Catholic faith, hope, and charity teach us what language to hold to all unbelievers: "The Lord our God, *who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,*† has ordained that the gift of faith should be within the reach of all at one time or another. Some privi-

\* Ecclesiastes, xxvii. 12.

† 1st Epistle to Timothy, ii. 3, 4.

leged souls there may be converted like St. Paul, in thunder and lightning, so to speak, but they are exceptions. The ordinary method is for unbelievers to labour, by the help of God's grace, which will never fail them, to become less unworthy and less unfit to receive the heavenly gift.

Let them make a good use of the virtuous inclinations and natural lights of their hearts to do good, and avoid the evil forbidden by their consciences, and the gift of faith will infallibly be bestowed upon them, were it even necessary that it should be brought by the hands of an angel. As for you, O unbelievers, who were born and are still living amid the rays of light diffused by Christianity, when you were baptized, you received that gift, and God has not withdrawn it. It lies buried beneath the ruins of your innocence and religious instruction. Take up your Catechism, breathe but one heartfelt word of repentance and confidence to the merciful Saviour of souls, and the gift will revive with redoubled energy, for such is ever the case when prodigal children return to their father.

## II.—I BELIEVE IN GOD.

*Ques.*—Why do you not say “I believe in a God,” or *I believe God*,” instead of “*I believe in God*?”

*Ans.*—To believe in a God is to believe that there is a God, and make an act of reason. To believe God is simply to believe his words, and submit our understanding to his. To believe in God is no doubt to believe that there is a God, to believe his word, and make him the sacrifice of our intellect, but it is likewise to give our whole hearts, offer our whole beings, and say to him: “*Lord, what have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and my portion for ever.*”\*

Such is the faith which Jesus Christ requires in his disciples, a living faith, elevated by hope and charity, a faith which refusing God nothing, and expecting all from him, obtains the most wonderful favours; for God takes up his abode in man according to the space which man makes for him in his heart by self-denial. This is the faith which moves mountains, and works a still greater miracle by transforming man's love of evil into love of good. The Divine Almighty power becomes incarnate in the hearts of the sinners of Nazareth, and causes

\* Psalms, lxxii. 25, 26.

them to exclaim : *This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith ! \**

This faith, therefore, triumphing over the spirit of the world which is constantly *prone to evil*,† has ever been necessary, and is now more so than ever. It is undeniable that all our civilizing virtues are the fruits of faith, and that the unbridled passions which hurry us on to barbarism have been let loose, and inflamed by heretical and philosophical Rationalism.

*Ques.*—Yes ; great self-sacrifices can be inspired and supported only by faith, which says : “ I look for my reward to God alone.”

*Ans.*—You may safely believe that faith is equally necessary in all the little daily sacrifices of self, which are required for the civilization of man, and that the most ordinary virtues fall to the ground, when supported solely by philosophical reasoning.

When man reasons with himself in order to feel at liberty to do wrong, he seldom mistrusts his arguments, however inconclusive, because that same passion which dictates them causes him to regard them as perfect. But supposing a somewhat painful duty is before him, the strongest reasons appear weak ; a thousand times may he dispel all doubts, and yet will they rise again, and so long as one doubt remains unsolved, the good that ought to be accomplished is neglected, and evil done in *its* stead. After this has continued for a certain space of time, evil is regarded as good and right, while virtue and duty are looked upon as evil and tyrannical. Attempt to overturn such theories, and their abettors will soon find means of silencing you. I will give one or two examples.

Suppose the poor mother of seven children to have just given birth to an eighth. She had contrived to bring up the others, being strengthened by the remembrance of her heavenly Father, and of the Mother of Sorrows, standing at the foot of the Cross. But now the false maxims of heresy and philosophy having purged her soul of Catholic *prejudices*, she makes use of her reason, and asks herself why she should consume her wretched existence in bringing up another victim. The babe is not strangled, I admit, for in that case human justice would interpose, but *it dies*. Faith had produced a heroine ; human reason brings forth a pagan, a monster capable of any crime.

Or take for another instance a labourer, who has hitherto been the very model of honesty, industry, temperance, and economy, because he *believed in God*, and doubted not the

\* 1 John, v. 4.

† Ibid, 19.

promises of *the Carpenter of Nazareth*. Our free thinkers have induced him to desert the Church for the Temple of Reason, the club, and the public-house; he has ceased to sing the Credo, but in its stead he has learned sanguinary disgusting songs, which he will teach his children, as the language of *undisguised reason*. On the day of the triumph of reason, the same instrument which the *believer* employed in hewing stone or wood, or in tilling the earth, the votary of reason will make use of to exterminate all who oppose the blissful *reign of reason*.

What in short is barbarism but the substitution of reason in the place of faith?

### III.—I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

*Ques.*—You here give me two mysteries at once, viz., the mystery of one God in three persons, and the mystery of a God creating everything out of nothing.

*Ans.*—Yes; but be not alarmed, for as mysteries are unavoidable, it is the part of philosophical good sense to make a proper selection, and to believe only such as are worthy of belief.

There are three kinds of mysteries, viz., of science, of faith, and of unbelief. The mysteries of science are beyond doubt the most numerous. Mathematics, which are called science in the strict sense of the word, but which in fact are merely instruments of science, contain a certain number of mysteries. They prove, by a chain of undeniable evidence, the truth of ideas which are repugnant at first sight to our reason. As regards those natural sciences, which treat of the existence of beings and of their properties considered *in concreto*, what are they? A chain of mysterious facts, proved by observation, and which upon closer examination become more or less comprehensible to our minds, but the first and last reason of which we cannot penetrate.

Like myself, you may continually have come upon the following Rationalist maxim: "Mysteries and miracles are only for fools." Now nothing can be more certain or more easily proved than the contrary saying: "Fools alone perceive neither mysteries nor miracles."

In fact, ask the uneducated simpleton, whose ignorance has not been enlightened by the Catechism, why and how plants, animals, and men exist and multiply? "It is their nature to do so," will he reply, laughing at your simplicity; "the earth brings forth plants, animals give birth to young of their own

species, and men to children. Such has ever been the case, and probably ever will be."

But put the same question to one who is a fool indeed, because half-instructed and filled with conceit, he will not laugh at you, for he knows at least this much, how rarely true genius and talent are to be met with. Nay, he will even acknowledge the question to be a difficult one, and speak scornfully of the childish solutions given and believed in the middle ages, when *priests were accustomed to burn clever men alive*; then after a few flourishes in honour of such men as Bacon and Galileo, he will declaim the subject of his modern theories, and the facts on which they rest. If at the end you do not find yourself much enlightened or convinced, you will at least perceive that the free thinker is perfectly satisfied with himself.

No doubt you have already guessed the answer of a truly wise man. Rightly appreciating modern discoveries, he will say: "Careful study has revealed to us a large number of facts quite sufficient to overturn all the ancient theories, but wholly insufficient to establish any new ones on a firm basis. Science still remains to be formed; it is as yet, and probably will be for many years to come, nothing but *a more or less rich, but still very incomplete catalogue of facts, known to us, as far as regards their existence and some of their qualities, but with the essence of which we are totally unacquainted.* With Socrates, Montaigne, Pascal, and all far-seeing men, we are obliged to say: "The only thing we see clearly is, that we cannot see to the bottom of anything."

What do these words imply? That everything from man himself down to a worm, a blade of grass, or a grain of sand, is to a true philosopher a mystery and a miracle, that is to say, the work of intelligence and power infinitely superior to our own.

Now, if there is nothing but mystery in that material nature of which we form a part, which we see with our eyes, touch with our hands, and submit to the action of the hammer or chisel, is it not madness to require the Supreme, Invisible, Infinite Being, the source of all life, to reveal himself to our weak understandings, such as he is, without a shadow of mystery?

*Ques.*—Yes; such a demand may well be considered absurd, as the Wise Man of the Bible observed many centuries ago: *And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find out the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven, who shall search out? \**

\* Wisdom, xi. 16.

All that can be required in mysteries of faith is certainty of their existence, and that they are not in evident opposition with the principles of human reason.

*Ans.*—Now, both these conditions are fulfilled by all the mysteries of the Catholic Creed, and particularly by those of the Trinity and the Creation, which dogmas are closely connected, not merely with a few texts of the Bible, but with the whole system of Christian Revelation. Take away the Creation, and what remains of the Old and New Testaments? Nothing. Take away the unity of God from the Divine essence, and again what remains of the Old and New Testaments? Nothing, literally nothing. Take away the Three Persons, united in essence, but really distinct in person; take away the Father personally distinct from the Son and Holy Ghost, the Son personally distinct from the Father and Holy Ghost, or the Holy Ghost personally distinct from the Father and Son, what can you understand of the New Testament? Nothing whatever. Without the Trinity, what is meant by the Eternal Father *who so loves the world as to give his only begotten Son; by the Son equal to his Father in all things*, who humbles himself even to our nothingness, and passes through all the stages of human life, from the womb of the Virgin to the sepulchre, to fulfil the will of his Father, and reconcile man with God; or by the Holy Spirit promised by the Son to his Apostles, and sent from the Father to accomplish the work of our sanctification? The existence of these Three Divine Persons, as spoken of in Scripture, would be but an unmeaning, self-contradictory riddle.

Leave, then, the Socinians and other enemies of the Trinity to make use of the Greek language, or of whatsoever else they please, in the hope of depriving Catholic Theology of its scriptural proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity. They are blinder than a child of the desert who should imagine he could overturn the Pyramids of Egypt by subtracting from them a single grain of sand. For a real philosopher, who has any knowledge whatever of Christianity, there is no medium; he sees that he must either admit the Creation and the Trinity, or destroy Christianity as an imposture. Now, you must readily acknowledge that the latter performance would by no means be an easy one.

*Ques.*—No; for the man who should fancy he had overturned such a Colossus, would probably have only turned his own brain. The existence of these mysteries is therefore a certainty to every Christian mind. As for the arguments by which unbelievers flatter themselves that they can prove the absurdity of these dogmas, they are so trivial as scarcely to be worthy of notice.

*Ans.*—Yes; they are all founded on ignorance of even the letter of the Catholic Catechism, and we may therefore leave such folly to those cavillers to whom even children can say “go to the Catechism, and there learn two things; our faith, and your own ignorance.” I must add one word further upon this subject.

Do we understand the mystery of the human family—a father, mother, and child, any more than the mystery of the Divine Family—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? I think not. If we admit the former on the testimony of our senses, and of our fellow men, why should we not admit the latter on the testimony of God, who can be the sole competent witness of what constitutes his own Divine Essence? Had not I promised to be brief, particularly in whatever pertains to metaphysics, I could prove that the belief of One God in three Divine Persons might be admitted, philosophically speaking, sooner than that of one God in one Person.

It is not only possible, but necessary, that every thing should have been *created*, as our examination of the First Fact (see Book 1st) fully proved. Since, without God, a plant or an animal could not be formed out of the little particles of down or atoms of dust of which they are composed, it necessarily follows that this down and dust must belong to God, and consequently have been made by him. Because we do not understand *how* the Almighty Power of God created these elements out of nothing, must we therefore fancy that they existed from all eternity, and that God only organised them by way of getting rid of this dust and these atoms, which had adhered, no one knows how, to his Infinite Being?

Is not the Creation a personal affair attested by our own consciences? Where were we a hundred years ago? Is not the act and power of creation more familiar to our thoughts and desires than anything else? Of what do we speak, save of what we have made in the past, of what we are making in the present, or of what we intend to make in the future? True, our creations are but changes of form, but if we, who ourselves are made out of nothing, possess the power of creating new forms, may we not reasonably acknowledge the power of creating substances in the Most High God?

In short, we must either believe the Mysteries of Faith, or the mysteries of Atheistical, Pantheistical, Deistical infidelity—the Apostles’ Creed, or the Free-thinkers’ Creed, which is as follows: “I pledge myself never to think about religion at all, or if by chance I should happen to do so, I will only



feed my mind with ridiculous chimeras and contradictory absurdities."

Before proceeding to the Second Article, let us reflect for a moment on the light and strength which the first diffuses over the Christian soul.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty.* "What have I to fear so long as I fulfil his Will!" exclaims the Christian tried in the furnace of severe trial. "However hopeless, painful, and insupportable my situation may appear in the eyes of men, it is not so in the eyes of my Almighty Father, who beholds me. If he wills, or at least permits it to be as it is, it must certainly be the best for me."

*"Creator of Heaven and Earth.* Heaven, pre-eminently the work of my Father, is the eternal abode which he has prepared for me. If earth is the scene of so much trial, it is because he does not wish me to become attached to this world, like so many of my fellow creatures, who sacrifice eternal realities to passing shadows. But he has created an invisible as well as a visible Heaven, composed of millions of angels and archangels, and when he commanded the sun, moon, and stars to give light to the eyes of our body, he at the same time said to the angels and archangels: 'Fly to the assistance of your brethren on earth, and keep them in all their ways.\*' Is not this enough to console me for being deserted by men."

See, then, how the First Article of the Creed secures from despair a soul bending beneath the weight of even the heaviest afflictions.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty.* O what a comfort is this belief to a father or mother doomed by birth or misfortune to poverty! What an unanswerable reason does it enable them to give their children for the trials of their position, so numerous in comparison with those of others! Above all, what ineffable consolation is to be found in this belief, when premature death deprives a numerous family of its earthly stay! The dying parent says to those who are left: "The Almighty Father calls me; trust in him, my children; he will never forget that his chosen name is *the Father of orphans!*"†

Faith in the first article of the Creed is then the best preservative against despair, envy, or any of the vices which give rise to socialism. It would also be the best remedy for that other baneful effect of socialism—the hard-heartedness of the rich.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty.* How great a restraint

\* Psalm xc. 11.

† Psalm lxxvii. 6.

is not such a belief upon all who are in any degree entrusted with that authority which God has bestowed upon some of his children only for the good of their brethren !

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## ARTICLE II.

*And in Jesus Christ, his Only Son, our Lord.*

### I.—AND IN JESUS CHRIST.

*Ques.*—What is the meaning of the name *Jesus Christ* ?

*Ans.*—*Jesus* signifies *Saviour*.

*Christ* signifies *anointed* or *consecrated*. By joining these titles together, the Catholic professes his belief that Jesus Christ is the Saviour, High Priest, and Eternal King of all men. These names are an abridgment of all that God has done in the Creation and Redemption of mankind.

God having determined to make man to his own *image and likeness*, stamped him necessarily in the first place with the mark of unity, and created one single individual, Adam, to whom was given the investiture of the whole earth, and on whom were imposed the conditions by which it was to be retained.

It was only when Adam had been thus created, instructed, and consecrated, that he received from God the companion who was to share the work of peopling the earth with his descendants ; and this companion was *the bone of Adam's bone, and the flesh of his flesh*.\*

In the designs of God, the first man was not then simply a *man*, but pre-eminently *the* man—the representative of the human race, the high priest, divinely entrusted with the office of communicating *the law of life for an inheritance*,† to all his posterity ; the king, invested with all the authority necessary for the government of his countless family. Had Adam been faithful to his calling, he would have retained his twofold dignity for ever, since the possession of Heaven does not entail the forfeiture, but rather the eternal confirmation of the office of kings and high priests *according to God's own heart*, who are for ever exalted and glorified.

Adam sinned, and drew along with him in his fall the whole human race, of which he was the representative, and which was

\* Genesis ii. 23.

† Ecclesiastes xvii. 9.

to proceed from his loins. In the scheme of the Redemption, God maintained the same principle of unity, and the same dependence of man upon his fellow-man. But it was no longer sufficient merely to guide men into the paths of justice, for they were degraded, corrupted, and gone astray—it was necessary that they should first be regenerated. Now this could not be effected by a mere man, therefore was it ordained that the Son of God should become the *Son of Man*, the *New Adam*, the *Man above all Men*, the *Priest for ever*, according to the order of *Melchisedeck*, the *King whose inheritance was to be all nations with their rulers*. But there was one condition to be fulfilled—that he should be the *Saviour of mankind*. The Cross was to be the emblem of his priesthood and royalty. As he himself declared, *when lifted up from the earth he would draw all things to himself*,\* and be acknowledged the *eternal High Priest of our souls*, the *King of kings*, and the *Lord of lords*.†

Thus you see that the adorable Name of *Jesus Christ* contains an abridgment of the history of the Creation and fall of man, and of the plan adopted by Divine Wisdom for our creation and redemption.

*Ques.*—Yes, and this is again one of those mysteries which our reason can barely admit. “What folly to imagine that man can sin before coming into existence!” “What injustice to condemn all men to perish for the fault of one man!” exclaim all free thinkers.

*Ans.*—Your two sentences contain the essence of the objections advanced by free thinkers. The first objection arises solely from ignorance. The Catholic Church has always made a most careful distinction between *original* and *actual* sin. *Actual* sin is the sin we ourselves commit, whenever we knowingly violate the Law of God. *Original* sin is not our own personal sin, but the sin of *human nature*, which was degraded, vitiated, and corrupted in its progenitor Adam. Human nature it is, which, transmitted by the mysterious channel of generation, brings us the stain it received in the person of our first father. What is there in this against reason, or that implies the absurdity of sinning before we come into existence?

No doubt we do not understand how our soul, created but yesterday, by Almighty God, can have become stained by its contact with the body, which has descended from Adam. This arises solely from our total ignorance of the mysterious relations established by God between our soul and body, and between the

\* John xii. 32.

† Apoc. xix. 16.

first man and all his posterity. But these relations, however hidden, really exist, and cannot be denied. The soul is tyrannised over by the body, and life reaches us by a long chain of generations, which form a visible link between ourselves and the first human pair. Such being the case, is it so incredible that we, the children of the *earthly* man (who cast himself down, and adhered to the earth by his sin), should, as St. Paul says, *have borne the image of the earthly?*\*

Yet more; do not facts prove the truth of this dogma? Is not the mystery of original sin constantly unfolded before our very eyes? Perchance the arguments of free thinkers have banished it from the face of the earth!

*Ques.*—Far from it; for, as you said in another place, from the conduct of those who deny original sin, may be drawn one of the most conclusive arguments in its favour.

*Ans.*—In that I only asserted what each one of us may see with his own eyes. If there was any thing that could make a person doubt the fact of our being born in original sin, it would be the sight of those good and perfect Christians who, filled with the love of God and their neighbour from their very cradles, make their lives one uninterrupted series of good works. Nevertheless, question those angels in human form, and you will soon perceive that *they* have not the slightest doubt concerning original sin and its fatal consequences.

No one can be more fully alive than they to the fact that there are two men within us, one created by God, the other produced by sin, and that the latter exercises a most fatal influence over the former. In all the sincerity of their minds and hearts they acknowledge the presence within themselves of that *original malice*, which they have banished from their works, whilst unbelievers proclaim in their actions what they deny with their mouths. No doubt there are exceptions, but who can fail to recognise the following picture of unbelievers, drawn by a master hand, as a most correct likeness of the mass?

*"They are corrupt, and are become abominable in their ways. . . . . Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they acted deceitfully; the poison of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; they only flatter the people in order to devour them as they eat bread."*†

As for the other objection, "how unjust to condemn all men to perdition for the fault of one man;" it would be necessary, in

\* 1st Epistle to Corinthians, xv. 49.

† Psalm xiii. 1—4.

order to answer it, that I should enter into details which I have given in a former work, and cannot repeat here.\*

The solidarity of the human race, about which free thinkers talk so much, without knowing what it is, is not an unmeaning word: it is the constitutive law of *humanity* (the aggregate of mankind). If between a nation and its political chief there exists such a solidarity, that the chief is able, under certain circumstances, either to save or ruin the nation, may not the Creator, with perfect justice, have established the strictest solidarity between Adam and that human family, of which he was the natural, the religious, and the political head? And, when this solidarity is once established, how could the head fall without involving the whole family in his ruin? For a true philosopher, the whole question may be resumed in these words: Had Almighty God a right to bestow existence upon all mankind as the members of one common family, with the risk of their becoming corrupt, and seducing one another, or, on the contrary, ought he, to prevent such a catastrophe, not to have created them at all, or to have created a number of isolated individuals, entirely distinct from each other?

I think I have now said sufficient to prove that the mystery of original sin can be difficult of belief only to the superficial mind of a free thinker, whose reason is clouded by ignorance and prejudice.

## II.—HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD.

*Ques.*—Why do you say "*his Only Son*," since the Holy Ghost also proceeds from the Father?

*Ans.*—You must understand that in all that regards the Procession of the Divine Persons, our reason can know nothing but what God has been pleased to reveal. It is a mystery hidden in the inscrutable depths of the Infinite Essence of God. Now, Divine Revelation, as made to us through the letter of sacred Scripture, and through the living voice of the Church, informs us—1st, that there is in God only *one Son begotten from all eternity by the Father*; 2ndly, that there is but one *Holy Ghost not begotten, but proceeding, from all eternity, from the Father and the Son*.

And this is all we can know on the subject.

It is true that Catholic theologians, by collecting together all the passages of Scripture, and comments of the most celebrated Doctors of the Church concerning this mystery, succeed in ren-

\* See *Science de la Vie*, t. I. leçons xxiii. xxvi.

dering it somewhat less obscure ; but as such questions pertain to deep theology, they cannot be included in an elementary work like this.

*Ques.*—I have no objections to make against the title of *our Lord*, which cannot be refused to Jesus Christ, when he is once acknowledged to be the Only Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind.

*Ans.*—Yes ; he is most truly *our Lord*, since he is the *Consubstantial Son* of the most High God, and the *Eternal Word*, by whom all things were made, and without whom was made nothing that was made, as St. John says.\* He is likewise truly our Lord in his character of *Man-God*, giving his life for the redemption of those whom he has deigned to call his *brethren*, and to invite to share in his eternal kingdom. He has, then, a most full right to this title, but it is necessary often to keep it in view, that we may not recoil from the consequences deduced from it by the Apostle of the Gentiles : *And you are Christ's ; . . . . you are not your own. For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body ; be not made the bond-slaves of men.*†

### ARTICLE III.

*Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*

#### I.—WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

*Ques.*—What reason can be assigned for this departure from the laws of nature ?

*Ans.*—The best, in my opinion, is that given by the Archangel Gabriel in his answer to the question of the blessed Virgin : *How shall this be done, because I know not man ? The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee ; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*† Was it not suitable to the dignity of the Son of God, and Saviour of mankind, that he should take possession, with all due authority, of that human nature which he came to redeem ? Was it not befitting that the *New Man*, who was infinitely superior to the first man, should at least, like him, proceed immediately from the hands of God, in body as well as soul ?

To those weak minds which are scandalised at this superna-

\* John i. 3. † 1 Cor. iii. 23 ; vi. 19, 20 ; vii. 25. ‡ Luke i. 34, 35.

tural conception you might say: "If you had bestowed any thought upon the miracle of human generation, you would have perceived that what is really astonishing in it is the intervention, not of God, but of man." Nothing can be more natural than for the Creator to organise a human body and soul, since such a work pertains to the Almighty alone; ; but that man should be associated with God in so marvellous a creation, man who is utterly ignorant of *how* it is done, this is the only astonishing part in the eyes of a real philosopher.

*Ques.*—True; but why does Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, so often call himself the *Son of Man*?

*Ans.*—Observe, that he calls himself the *Son of Man*, and not the *Son of Men*, or of a *man*, such as we all are. By this mysterious name, he reminds us of the mysterious promise made to fallen man; he appears as the Son promised to Adam, but promised as the *seed of the woman*, destined to destroy the work of man, seduced by the woman, who herself had been deceived by Satan.\* And Jesus Christ retained this name of *Son of Man* until the day of his *baptism*, when Pilate, presenting him to heaven, earth, and hell, said, without being conscious of the meaning of his words, "*Behold the Man!*"

It in fact was in accordance with the merciful requirements of Divine Justice that *Man should pay the debt of man*, as I have explained in a former work.†

*Ques.*—Why is the conception of Jesus Christ attributed to the Holy Ghost?

*Ans.*—Although it is clearly understood by all well instructed Catholics, that the Divine Attributes, and whatever works emanate from them, are common to all the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, nevertheless custom, sanctioned by the Holy Scriptures, induces us to assign to each Person those attributes and works which are suitable to his position in the Divine Family. Thus the Father being the *Beginning without a beginning*, the Generator of the Son, the Principle, together with the Son, from whom proceeds the third Person, to him is attributed, in a special manner, the creative power. To the Son, as being begotten by the way of understanding, as being the *Word*, the Consubstantial Image in which the Father beholds himself reflected—to the Son wisdom is especially attributed. To the Holy Ghost, as proceeding from the love of the Father and the Son, are especially attributed the works of Divine love.

\* Genesis iii. 15.

† *La Science de la Vie*, t. I. leçon xxviii; t. II. leçon xxix.

In the creation of angels and of men, the Father acts as the creating cause, the Son, or Word, as the disposing cause, and the Holy Ghost as the inspiring, preserving, perfecting cause. Those beings, on whom the Divine power has bestowed existence, and whom the Divine wisdom has placed and holds in exact co-ordination, the Divine love embraces, preserves, and urges onward towards that height of perfection for which they were created by an infinitely powerful, wise, and loving God.

From this appropriation of the works of Divine charity to the Holy Ghost it follows, that the conception of Jesus Christ, which was the greatest effort of the love of God for man, should be attributed to him, although common to the Three Persons.

Before leaving this subject, it may be as well to observe, that the conception of Jesus Christ must not be confounded with the incarnation of the Word. Although accomplished at the same moment, and with the same object, there is an essential difference between these two Divine acts. The conception comprises three things: viz., the formation of the body of Jesus Christ from the substance of the Virgin Mary; the creation of his soul; and the union of his soul and body: these three things were the effect of a passing act of the power of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But the *Incarnation* is the act by which the Son of God, the eternal Word, *united personally to himself* his body and soul, at the very moment of their creation and junction in the womb of the blessed Virgin; this was a permanent act, which had a beginning, but will never have an end, as the Word will never cease to be the God-Man. It was his own personal, *hypostatic* act, and consequently his alone. As the Son, as the Word, he is not either the Father or the Holy Ghost; now he took upon himself our human nature, as the Son, the Word, therefore he is the only one of the Three Divine Persons who became man.

## II.—WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

*Ques.*—Your last considerations have disposed of the usual objections to this part of the third Article.

*Ans.*—Omitting, then, all objections, let us only admire the heavenly design with which the blessed Virgin Mary was placed in the Creed in the first place after the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

As the Apostles' Creed was to be the banner of the moral resurrection of mankind, it was important that woman, who had been everywhere undervalued, degraded, and trampled upon, should there occupy a conspicuous position.



You know the fate of the companion given by the Creator to man as a help-mate in his divine office of generating and educating men. Under the ancient system she was what she still is among the infidel nations of Asia, Africa, and Oceanica—a prey, thrown by the gods or by fate to satisfy man's brutal appetites. Idolatry, it is true, had even held her up for adoration, but only in the train of man, and that the latter might continue in heaven the sensual life which he had led on earth. The goddesses were only prostitution deified. For woman to be restored to her original position, nothing less was required than devotion to that holy Virgin, who, as foretold by the prophets, should have conceived, brought forth, borne in her arms, and fed with her milk the *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*.

In fact, what degraded the female sex in ancient times, and what still degrades it wherever it is not what it should be? What but an exaggerated idea of its weakness, and of its necessary dependence upon the *stronger sex*, which is in accordance with the pagan idea that woman is made only for the service of man. Woman flatters the vices of man in order to allure him, and corrupted man bestows upon her in return that contempt which she deserves. I have elsewhere drawn your attention to the effects of the corruption of the female sex among the Greeks, and Romans, and the barbarians now living in Asia, and have also given you Montesquieu's remark upon the subject.\*

How is woman to be raised up again? By saying from her earliest childhood: "God has created me, and for himself alone. *I know not man*, and I have no need to know him, God is sufficient for me."

When the entire life of a young maiden expresses such sentiments as these, man bows down as before a superior being; his love becomes more pure, and more elevated; he sighs as much for a union between their souls as for a union between their bodies. Then the virgin may go to the foot of the altar to receive the sacred dignity of a wife; she will possess sufficient authority to fulfil her heavenly duties, to encourage her husband in the paths of holiness, or convert him from vice to virtue; and she will present a virtuous father with still more virtuous children.

But from what source springs the virgin, who herself is the source whence spring the Christian wife and mother? First, from the adoration of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and secondly, from deep veneration for the Virgin of virgins, *full of*

\* See the Second Fact, chap. iii.

*grace, blest beyond all other women* by the Almighty Father; chosen from the beginning by the only Son of the Most High to be his Mother; rendered fruitful by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and elected to give the world its Saviour, its High Priest, and its Eternal King.

What more can be required by a Christian philosopher to justify that loving veneration which the children of the Catholic Church have never ceased to offer the blessed Virgin Mary, in all times and all places?

*Ques.*—Devotion to the Mother of God, when confined within proper limits, has always appeared to me a most natural duty for whoever believed in the Son of God made man, and I cannot understand how Protestants, instead of correcting certain abuses in this devotion, attack the devotion itself with so much bitterness.

*Ans.*—If you do not understand, it is in some measure your own fault. All Protestants, even those who are the least impregnated with the first principle which produced Protestantism, are more or less imbued with the original vice of their Church.

Who were the standard bearers of all the revolutions of the sixteenth century in Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, and England? The worthy sons and followers of that Luther who declared the vow of virginity to be Anti-Christian, diabolic, and abominable, and purified himself from that papistical stain by debauching a nun! How could you expect that horde of preachers, who had for the most part just forsaken the cloister, or abandoned the priestly dignity, and who were ransacking the convents for a supply of wives, not to let loose all their fury against devotion to the Queen of Virgins, and make it the subject of their absurd accusations against the Church of Jesus Christ? Now when the accusation of adoring the blessed Virgin and the saints had been once made against the Catholics by the fathers of the *glorious Reformation*, what could be more natural than that it should continue to be an article of faith, or at least a weapon in the hands of the children of private judgment?

You desire this devotion to be always kept within due limits. So does the Catholic Church. But are you aware what those due limits are? As long as divine honours are not rendered to Mary, we are bound to honour her to the utmost of our power, and to express feelings of as great gratitude, love and confidence, as can be expressed to a creature. By raising her not merely above all mankind, but also above the angels, we only acknowledge what was accomplished by the holy Trinity, we only give expression in Christian devotion to the third fundamental article of Christian Faith—*He was born of the Virgin Mary!*

Yes, devotion to the Mother of God is indeed a part of Christianity itself, as I explained in a former work. In a comparison between the two Eves, I there showed what a wonderful change in the part originally assigned to woman by her Creator has been effected by Christianity.\* Here I shall confine myself to the consequence of this devotion, which is the *good education* of men, that is to say, *civilization*. My reasoning simply expresses these three facts. Woman elevates man; devotion to Mary elevates woman; civilization, therefore, is ever on the increase where devotion to Mary bears proper fruit.

*Ques.*—And what is that fruit?

*Ans.*—The real fruit of devotion is *imitation*. Statues, pictures, altars, ornaments, music, illuminations, pilgrimages, or confraternities, are the flowers without which there is no fruit; but the fruit itself is the increase in the number of those who imitate the Virgin Mother: *i. e.* of those virgins who, without losing their virginity, become mothers—mothers of orphans, mothers of the young of both sexes who have been exposed to vice and ignorance, mothers of the poor and distressed, mothers of the sick, mothers of young girls of all classes, whom they educate in habits of virtue, and instruct in all that can make them good wives and good mothers.

The nation which brings forth fruits of this species in so great abundance as to have enough and to spare for others, must necessarily make the greatest progress in civilization, and possess the most powerful influence in civilizing its neighbours. In such a nation vice may still exist to a fearful extent, but when the critical moment arrives, there will also be found within it sufficient virtue to obtain assistance from above, and to display all the energy necessary for securing the victory.

In those countries, on the contrary, where the middle class is half Pagan and half Protestant, and the task of educating women for the world is taken out of the hands of the virgin mothers, public opinion being in favour of the destruction of convents as the first step towards political resuscitation, what is to be seen? Nations in a state of second childhood, who, after some futile endeavours to throw off the foreign yoke, sink again into the most degrading slavery. The female sex may possibly be devout to the blessed Virgin, but the blessed Virgin is not suffered to teach the female sex how to form a manly race—how to form the three representatives of the moral and material strength of a nation—the priest, the soldier, and the labourer.

\* *Solution de grands Problèmes*, t. II. ch. iv. 5.

As for Protestantism, which has so long derided both the veneration and imitation of our blessed Lady, we may say to all its followers: "If your *glorious Reformation* has not degraded woman to the position in which she was before the spread of Catholic Christianity, it may be attributed partly to your having been originally educated in the bosom of the Catholic Church, and partly to the influence which Catholic faith and maxims still exercise over Europe."

I have said sufficient to make you feel the importance of believing, professing, and above all of practising all that is taught us in the third article of the Creed: *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*

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#### ARTICLE IV.

*Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.*

*Ques.*—I should like to know in the first place, why the Creed, usually so concise, should enter into so many details concerning the death of our Saviour.

*Ans.*—These details have been given to prevent and refute two kinds of heresies, the one dogmatical, and the other moral.

Dogmatical heresy was the heresy of the *Docetes* or *Fantastics*, sectarians of the first ages, who sprang up under the very eyes of the apostles themselves. They were called *Fantastics*, because they more or less denied the reality of the sufferings, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus Christ, and held that these events took place in appearance only. As this heresy is extinct, let us proceed to moral heresy, which subsists for ever among men.

This heresy consists in denying openly or tacitly the necessity of our suffering, bearing our cross, dying, or descending into the grave. Openly to deny the obligation imposed upon all Christians of suffering, of *crucifying their flesh with its vices and concupiscences, of putting off the old man who is corrupted according to the desire of error, of putting on the new man who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth*,\* is to be heretics indeed, to trample under foot every page of the Gospel, and all the practices of Christianity, and to renew the *edifying* dogmas of Luther, Calvin, Beza, and Zuinglius, who abolished absti-

\* Ephesians, vi. 22—24.

nence, fasting, and all works painful to the flesh as abominable superstitions, in virtue of the following principles of the *pure Gospel* :

*"To preach to Christians that they are obliged to suffer and do penance according to the practice of the Papists, when Christ has suffered and died for the expiation of our sins, is to deny the merits of the Redeemer, and to despise Christian liberty, which consists in saving our souls, only by faith in the merits of Christ, without loading ourselves with that burden of good works, which is of no other use than to drag souls into hell."*

It is only fair to say that this heresy is for the most part extinct in the Protestant Church, and even that it never brought forth all its deadly fruits, because the old ground of Catholic faith and morality was never totally depraved by the Reformation. If, by chance, you still find some Methodist ministers who preach liberty of soul and body in the crudest manner, and who, renewing Luther's commentary on the text of St. Paul : *Where sin hath abounded there let grace still more abound* ; say that the true method of making grace abound in us is to let sin abound first, it would be mere waste of words to refute the objections of such persons.

*Ques.*—Yes, indeed ; it would be better to give information against them to the police.

*Ans.*—Such would beyond doubt be the duty of every good member of society, whether Catholic or Protestant.

But if it is unusual to find this heresy in an *explicit* form among heretics, it is not at all unusual to find it *implied* even among believers.

How many brilliant theories and sophisms do not men invent to excuse themselves from the obligation of suffering and of mortification, to banish the salutary thought of death, and to turn away from the instructive spectacle of the tomb ! Nevertheless, how can you really benefit yourself, your family, or your neighbour ; how render services to the public or to the State, but at the cost of painful sacrifices ? Point out to me any situation, from the throne to the cottage, in which you are not obliged to suffer something daily. How many fatal temptations are there which the thought of death alone dispels ; how many idols which may overcome in one moment the most tried virtue, unless that virtue strengthens itself by descending into the grave, there to behold what its cherished idols and man himself will shortly be !

How is man to be induced, if not to love, at least to accept willingly and submissively all the privations, sacrifices, and

hardships inseparable from the due accomplishment of the general duties of a Christian, and the particular duties of each individual? How is mankind to be induced to accept the universal task of labour? How is the passion for enervating luxuries among the rich, and for brutal pleasures among the poor, to be curbed?

Here lies the problem of civilization. Discuss it as you please, you will be forced to acknowledge there is but one true solution—living, burning faith in the only Son of the Most High, who from the stable of Bethlehem to the Cross of Calvary, of his own will embraced labour, poverty, and suffering, in all their bitterness; and wherefore? For our salvation in time and eternity. To explain those words which otherwise we never should have understood: *Blessed are the poor; blessed are those who mourn, and who suffer. Woe be to those who seek their consolation here below!*

O you who are sincere and judicious promoters of social progress, lay aside your political theories and neglect nothing for the revival and propagation of faith in this article: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

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## ARTICLE V.

*He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead.*

### I.—HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.

*Ques.*—What is meant by the word *hell*? The abode of the damned, or only the grave?

*Ans.*—Not the grave; for the Creed purposely makes a distinction between *the descent into hell* and *the burial*, which was mentioned in the preceding article. Neither can it be the dwelling of the damned, for though our Redeemer manifests his power there, it is very doubtful whether he *appeared*, and certain that he did not take up his abode there.

By the word *hell* (*lower regions*), taken in its fullest sense, is understood the abode of souls excluded from supreme happiness, which consists in possessing God, and seeing him face to face.

Now all those souls which quitted this world before their ransom was paid, and the abode of eternal joys opened to them by our Redeemer, were in this state of deprivation of the sight

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of their heavenly Father. The souls of the just were not, however, in the same situation as those of the wicked, who, by their criminal lives and impenitent deaths, had exhausted Divine mercy, and had thus incurred the sentence of eternal damnation. The former were exempt from all sensible suffering, and in the possession of as great an amount of happiness as could be experienced away from the sight and possession of God. Between their abode, which the Gospel calls *Abraham's bosom*,\* and that of the damned, there was a *great chaos*;† an impassible abyss, of which Jesus Christ speaks in the parable of the rich glutton. It was of this provisional paradise (which theologians have agreed to call *Limbo*) that our Saviour spoke, when he said on the Cross, to the penitent thief: *Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*‡

Besides the abode of souls exempt from the slightest stain of sin, and that of the damned, the Catholic Church (in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, Apostolical tradition, and common sense) has always held that there is a place of temporary punishment for souls taken out of life without having entirely satisfied Divine justice, either for those mortal sins, of which only the eternal punishment has been remitted, or for those other smaller faults which although not worthy of everlasting perdition, yet offend the infinite purity of Almighty God.

Having made these preliminary observations, I now proceed to explain the sense in which Catholics have always understood these words: *He descended into hell.*

The sacrifice of universal redemption being accomplished by the death of the adorable Victim, the soul of our Redeemer went to bear the happy tidings to those just souls which had been awaiting it so many ages, and were to be the first to enjoy its blessed effects. When our Saviour entered into the *Paradise* promised to the good thief, he said to its happy inhabitants: "Yet a little while, my beloved, and I will conduct you to the *kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world*, and the gates of which are now thrown open to you by my death;" and during the interval which elapsed before Ascension Day, those blessed souls were in fact made partakers of the happiness of heaven: for the sight of the Divine Word indissolubly united to the soul of the Redeemer, transferred them from *Abraham's bosom* to the bosom of their God.

Thus far is certain, what follows is extremely probable, that our Saviour likewise visited the souls still in debt to Divine

\* Luke, xvi. 22.

† Ibid, 26.

‡ Ibid, xxiii. 43.

justice, released them from their sufferings, and made known to them that they would constitute a portion of that glorious troop of *captives* who were to escort him on his *triumphant entry into heaven*, a troop long ago beheld by the prophets.\* With regard to that eternal hell from *which there is no redemption*, did our Saviour appear there?

There are some imposing names among Catholic fathers and doctors, in favour of the belief that he did; but they are not sufficiently numerous to make it a very plausible theological opinion; certainly not an article of faith.†

Not absolutely to reject or to accept either opinion, I think we may safely (theologically speaking) conciliate the two by holding that, if our Lord in his infinite wisdom thought fit to manifest his presence in the dwelling of everlasting woe, it was as the judge of the living and the dead—the sovereign of the universe, taking possession of the prisons of his everlasting kingdom, and forcing his obstinate enemies, the proud contemners of his mercy, to bend the knee before the sceptre of his justice, according to the words of the Apostle: “*He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death: even to the death of the Cross; for which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name that is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*”‡

*Ques.*—Would it be against faith to say that, since Christ had taken upon himself to pay Man’s debt, to the fullest extent, it might enter into the plan of Redemption for the Representative of Humanity to suffer for one instant the pains of Hell?

*Ans.*—Most certainly it would. On what could you ground an opinion which fills the conscience of a Christian with horror?

In a hymn which the Church recommends every priest to recite daily after Mass, it is said that *one single drop of the Blood of Jesus Christ would have been sufficient to cleanse the whole world from sin.* § Does not reason itself say that the smallest humiliation or suffering of the God-Man must be of infinite value? If our Divine Saviour was pleased to shed all his blood, instead of one drop only, and drink to the dregs the chalice of the bitterest

\* Among others, Osée., xiii. 14.; Psalm, lxxii. 19.

† See Petau. *Dogmat. Theo.* Vol. V., *De Incarnat.* B. XIII. ch. xv.—xviii.

‡ Philippians, ii. 8—10.

§ Cujus una stilla saluum facere

Totum mundum quit ab omni scelere.

*Rhythmus S. Thomæ Aquin. in Missali Rom.*



humiliations and sufferings, it was not precisely because Divine Justice required so much, but because nothing less would suffice to gain the victory over our sensuality and extreme repugnance to works of penance and expiation. After these words of the expiring Victim—*It is consummated!* to what purpose the momentary *reprobation* of the Son of God; to what purpose his tasting the eternal torments of the damned, and consequently, their *despair*, which is the most frightful of their sufferings?

Leave this dreadful idea to that dark theologian of Protestantism—Calvin, who actually defends it in his *Christian Institution*. (Book II., c. xvi).

## II.—THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

*Ques.*—Here we have another great mystery, but one not easy to dispute, when once we have accepted the others.

*Ans.*—Learn that the mysteries of Christian faith form an indivisible whole, and that if you reject one of them, you must reject all, even the first, which is by no means the least inscrutable—the mystery of an Infinite, Eternal God. You must take refuge in complete scepticism. Then you would be a free thinker in reality, that is to say, a coward, who fears the truth, and will not so much as think about religion, but ensconces himself in his own ignorance.

The mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the necessary consequence of the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption. The Son of God became man, and humbled himself even to the death of the Cross, solely to expiate in his flesh and destroy sin, which had condemned man to death, both of soul and body, for time and for eternity. The work of expiation once accomplished, was it not just that the sacred flesh, which had been mangled on the cross, and placed lifeless in the grave, for the salvation of mankind, should rise from the tomb, full of new, divine, immortal, glorious life, and thus say to all men—Take courage! *Now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep: for by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead; and as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive, but every one in his own order: the first fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ, who have believed in his coming.\**

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as a proof of his divinity, and pledge of our resurrection, is the keystone of the Christian

\* 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 20—23.

edifice : *If Christ be not risen again, said St. Paul, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.\**

One single doubt on this head shakes the whole edifice of faith, and is a death blow to virtue, that divine energy of the soul, which elevates it above the tyranny of the senses, and enables it to say to the body : "thou art blind to thy own true interests, therefore go on in the path of the commandments. So only shalt thou be preserved from eternal torments, and conducted to a life of everlasting bliss."

The moral resurrection of mankind is not possible, excepting by means of a lively faith in the Resurrection of the body, as we shall see in the eleventh Article.

## ARTICLE VI.

*He ascended into Heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*

*Ques.*—Must these words—*sits at the right hand of God the Father*, be understood literally ?

*Ans.*—No ; and all Catechists instruct children in the meaning of these metaphorical expressions, thus : "Our Blessed Saviour is represented as *sitting*, because, according to our customs, that attitude expresses best the glorious and eternal repose of our Redeemer after his laborious and painful life upon earth. It is an attitude proper for a judge or a sovereign, especially an omnipotent sovereign, who has no need of rising, going, or coming, to see what passes, or to superintend the execution of his orders. The Father, as a pure Spirit, has neither right nor left, but the right, being according to our customs, the place of honour, the Creed expresses by these words : *sits at the right hand*, that Jesus Christ is equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost, and that by the indissoluble union of his humanity and Divinity in the person of the Word, the God-man reigns with unlimited power in Heaven, Earth, and Hell."

I here restrict myself to one remark upon the moral strength which the soul of a believer imbibes from the meditation of this article.

We have already observed, and every one feels, that men are more weak than wicked. The soul is oppressed by the body, and too often bends beneath the yoke of its ignoble slave. The

\* 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 14.

body is under the fascination of other bodies. The whole man is under the interior influence of his evil inclinations, and the exterior influence of his fellow men, but the influence which is most terrible, and makes the greatest number of victims, is the influence of human respect. What antidote is there for this influence? More than one; but the most infallible, and that which gives efficacy to the others, is the habitual remembrance of the conqueror of the flesh, the world, and hell, who is seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty.

He sees me. Darkness cannot hide from him my most hidden thoughts, my most secret wishes. Thus is sin smothered in its cradle. He loves me. He has loved me, to such a degree as to sacrifice his glory and his life for my sake, and cannot I make him that sacrifice, which is the most pleasing in his eyes—the sacrifice of the vain satisfactions of pride, envy, avarice, and sensuality?

He is all-powerful. What have I to fear, were even the entire universe against me? *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.\**

The God Man, who humbled himself on Calvary, beneath the lowest of mankind, reigns, and will reign for all eternity. If I wish to *reign with him*, there is but one road for me to follow, I must also *suffer with him*.† By the habit of thus meditating on the sixth article of the Creed, does a Christian soul triumph over its own weakness, and become all-powerful against the temptations of the world and the flesh.

## ARTICLE VII.

*From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

*Ques.*—What judgment is here spoken of?

*Ans.*—The Christian Religion teaches that two judgments await us: the *particular* judgment, which will decide the fate of each individual the moment he quits this life, and the *general* judgment, which will take place at the end of the world, according to these words of our Saviour: *When the Son of Man shall come in his Majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty: and all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the*

\* Philippians iv. 13.

† 2nd Epistle to Timothy, ii. 12.

*shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, etc.\**

The particular Judgment being admitted by all men, whether Christians or infidels, who acknowledge the existence of one or several Gods, and being denied only by atheists or pantheists, it was not necessary to mention it in the Creed; but it was most important that the dogma of the general Judgment should there hold a prominent place, as it is a dogma pertaining especially to the Christian faith; this is done in the seventh article.

*Ques.*—After a particular Judgment in which Divine Justice will have rendered to every one according to his works, there seems no reason for a general Judgment.

*Ans.*—Even could we never see any reason, we ought not the less to believe in a general Judgment, since this belief rests on the word of Jesus Christ, the highest of all reasons in the eyes of a Christian. Perfectly ignorant as we are of the schemes of Divine Wisdom in the Creation of the world, it would be the height of impiety and folly in us to take exception to any actions of his government, such as he has been pleased to reveal them to us.

But is there really nothing in our consciences which demands this great and universal assize, presided over by our Divine Head? Question yourself; question your fellow creatures, and you will frequently hear the voice of your own heart and of the hearts of all who are oppressed, appealing to a Judgment which shall rectify all other judgments. Scripture tells us that this cry is echoed in Heaven *by the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. . . . How long, O Lord (holy and true), dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*† The soul, unjustly branded by the judgment of men, demands to be reinstated in the possession of its fair fame before men. This desire has been implanted in our hearts by God himself, who said: *Take care of a good name, for this shall continue with thee, more than a thousand treasures precious and great.*‡ This desire should therefore be satisfied.

Not only is the general Judgment called for by our conscience, but it is also a consequence of the divine System of the Creation and government of men, as shown to us by Christian philosophy. To understand this, you need only reflect that the Almighty

\* Matt. xxv. 31—46. † Apoc. vi. 9, 10. ‡ Eccles. xli. 15.

intended to create not souls only, or individual men only, but a family, the members of which were to be closely united and bound together.

*Ques.*—What connection can there be between this truth and a general Judgment?

*Ans.*—They are connected thus: 1st. God does not create souls alone, but souls united to bodies, and thus composing men. At the particular Judgment, the soul appears alone, unattended by its accomplice in good and in evil. It is then right and just that there should be a general Judgment, at which every individual *should appear, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he had done, whether it be good or evil.\**

2ndly. God does not create separate, independent individuals; but he has ordained that men should be generated, brought up, and governed by other men, that so all, from Adam to the last of mankind, should compose but one family, united by ties bodily and mental. At some time or other, should not the members of this family meet, thus to see and know each other? Such a meeting is impossible in this world in its present state, where each individual lives and dies unknown to by far the greater number of his contemporaries, to say nothing of the hundreds of generations who have preceded, and who are to succeed him. This meeting is likewise impossible in the Eternal abodes of Heaven and Hell, between which Divine Justice has placed an impassable abyss. Nothing, then, can be more right and proper than that there should be a re-union of the whole human family on that great day when Time will end, and Eternity begin.

Nor is this re-union merely the gratification of that common feeling which unites all mankind together; it is likewise imperatively demanded by Justice—Divine and human.

We all profit by the labours of past generations, and by the benefits which they have conferred upon mankind, in the same manner as we also participate in the evils they have bequeathed to us. This inheritance of good and evil, augmented by our own virtues and vices, is also transmitted by us to our descendants. Is it not fitting that on the day of *Retribution*, each of us should return thanks to our many unknown or calumniated benefactors, and recognize the authors of those numerous misdeeds which had remained unknown, or disguised beneath the appearance of virtue? Is it not just and fitting that each of us should behold in his descendants the plentiful harvest of virtues and vices which shall have sprung from the seed he himself has sown, and be blamed or praised, according to his deserts?

\* 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, v. 10.

But who is the most unacknowledged and the most calumniated of all benefactors? God himself—the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of the whole human family. What a torrent of blasphemies, from those suggested by Satan to Eve, even to those which Antichrist will suggest to his wretched dupes! Even among the children of God, how many complaints and murmurs have been breathed! how often has the Infinite Wisdom and Goodness of the Almighty been blamed! It is indispensable that all this should be rectified. By that light which will unveil to all the world every mystery of Divine Providence, it is befitting that all the angels and saints on the right hand, and all the demons and lost souls on the left, should exclaim with one common voice: “O Lord, thy judgments are infinitely just, thou art the pure Light which enlighteneth all darkness—thou art holiness and goodness undefiled; all good has come to us from thee; all evil has proceeded from ourselves alone; for what hast not thou done to save us!”

Lastly, the Eternal Leader of mankind will be justified, *and glorified in his Saints*. As he has ordained that not only priests and bishops, but fathers and mothers also, and all entrusted with any authority, should take part in the work of universal Redemption—so likewise he wills that they should concur in the Judgment, according to the extent to which they have forwarded the Work of God in the education of mankind. Around the twelve thrones promised to the Apostles, there will therefore be other seats for all who shall have continued and seconded their labours, and Scripture tells us that *this glory is to all the saints*.\*

At the particular Judgment, the just and sinners are both to be judged. At the General Judgment, the just will be admitted to judge, according to justice, those who here below have judged them according to iniquity. They will form the jury, as it were, of the Great Judge, and will thus enjoy the first fruits of the possession of that Eternal Kingdom which he has promised to share with them.†

I have now said sufficient to show you the connection between the article on a General Judgment and the other articles of the Catholic Faith.

*Ques.*—One word more. What do you mean by the *living and the dead*?

*Ans.*—By the *living* is meant the Just, who leave this world in a state of grace—that is to say, *alive* with the divine principle of charity, which causes us to love God above all things, and

\* Psalm cxlix. 9.

† Matthew xix. 28.

our neighbour as ourselves. By *the dead* is meant those who appear before God devoid of this charity, for it is written: *He who loves not abideth in death.\** Our Divine Lord also gives us to understand the same thing, when, in his anticipated account of the General Judgment, he mentions works of charity alone: *I was hungry, I was thirsty, etc., and you gave me to eat, to drink, etc.—Come, ye blessed of my Father, etc. I was hungry, I was thirsty, etc., and you gave me not to eat, etc.—Go, ye cursed, etc.*

Let us conclude by a reflection on the moral effects of the seventh article.

How many wicked thoughts and criminal intrigues, how much injustice, hatred, and revenge would be prevented, if men had a lively faith in the coming of that great Day of reparation and manifestation! How many moral and material miseries would be prevented, or relieved, by meditation on the two sentences which will for ever separate the good from the wicked! Nothing more would be required to put a stop to Revolutions, which spring from our own wickedness, and impatience under suffering, and which only render our burdens still heavier than before.

## ARTICLE VIII.

*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

*Ques.*—What do we profess by this article?

*Ans.*—In the first place, we profess our faith in the existence of the Holy Ghost. We acknowledge that there is in God a third Person, who eternally proceeds both from the Father and from the Son, who is not either the Father or the Son, but who, being equal in all things to those two Divine Persons, completes the Divine Being, and constitutes, together with the Father and the Son, the Eternal God, infinite in power, wisdom, and love. We call this Divine Person the Holy Spirit—first, because he is so named in the Gospel—secondly, because these words express the manner of his Procession. The third Person being the substantial Love of the Father and the Son, is, as it were, the *desire* or *aspiration* of the one for the other—hence the word *Spirit*. The Spirit, in uniting the Father to the Son by love, completes the holiness, that is to say, the perfection of the Divine

\* St. John, 1st Epistle, iii. 14.

Being, which consists in the unity of the All-powerful, All-wise, All-loving Being—hence the name of *Holy*.

By the eighth Article, we also profess our faith in all that Jesus Christ and his Apostles have said concerning the mission and operations of the Holy Ghost among men.

*Ques.*—In what do these operations and mission consist?

*Ans.*—To give you a correct idea of them, without entering into details which may be found in any explanatory catechism, I will make the following short remarks.

The Holy Ghost, being, as we have seen, the Consummator of the Divine Sanctity, is therefore considered as the Source and Perfecter of all holiness among men; hence his titles of Vivifier and Sanctifier, which are bestowed upon him by the Church.

Two things are required for the sanctification of man: 1st. Light to dissipate the darkness of his ignorance, and show him untarnished truth; 2nd. A change of will to purify his heart from its guilty affections, and engage it to *do the truth in charity*.\*

The Divine agency that enlightens our mind and reforms our will, is grace, a supernatural gift communicated to our souls, and acting upon them in unseen ways, the sensible effect of which is *conversion*, i.e., a change of the soul from the possession of a mere sensual and animal life to that of a new life, animated by faith, hope and charity. But it is necessary that the spiritual gift of grace should take a bodily form, to act on the soul imprisoned in the body. The interior word, which enlightens the mind, stands in need of exterior words which may strike the senses, and be the sign and visible expression of the invisible truth. *Faith cometh by hearing*, says St. Paul, *and hearing by the word of Christ*.†

In like manner, the secret force which is to move and change our hearts must take a sensible form; and that form is a *sacrament*, an outward sign of inward grace. Preaching and the Sacraments are therefore the channels divinely instituted for the sanctification of mankind.

*Ques.*—Could not God enlighten and convert souls without making use of these outward means?

*Ans.*—Certainly he could; but he has not chosen so to do. We find that even those souls whom he has converted by extraordinary means have had to follow the ordinary rules; witness St. Paul, who was struck down to the ground on the road to Damascus, and then sent to the disciple *Ananias*, to learn from

\* Ephesians iv. 15.

† Romans x. 17.



him *what he should do*.\* The reason of this is found in that divine law which is so infinitely honourable to mankind : *God deigns to make use of men to raise other men to a supernatural life, in the same manner as he makes use of men to impart natural life to their fellow men.*

The especial office of the Sanctifying Spirit is to qualify men for the ministry of salvation, and to communicate to them the divine art of sanctifying each other. *The Spirit of Truth*—it is he who inspired and continues to inspire all those words of truth which guide souls in the paths of holiness and justice ; it was he *who spoke by the Prophets*, in the words of the Nicean Creed ; it is he who every day speaks to us by the ministers of the New Law, who say, like the Apostles : *It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.*† *The Spirit of Life*—it is he who has communicated to all the Sacraments, whether of the Old or New Law, their life-giving power.

Nevertheless, there is a great difference between the influence exercised by the Holy Ghost on the ancient world, and that which he exercises in the regenerated world.

*Ques.*—In what does this difference consist ?

*Ans.*—In this ; that before the Incarnation of the Son of God, the movements of the Holy Ghost were hidden, restricted, interrupted, and irregular. *Hidden*, because the mystery of the Holy Trinity not being generally known among the Jews, so the Holy Ghost was not usually either known or invoked as the Governor and Sanctifier of souls. The movements of the Holy Ghost were *restricted* among the Jews to the teaching of an imperfect law, and the administration of Sacraments, which did not confer copious graces. They were also *interrupted*, for the Prophets, their principal instruments, only appeared at long intervals from each other. They were *irregular*, in this sense, that while they sanctified the Jews by faith in the promised Redeemer, and by the observance of the law of Moses, they enlightened and sanctified the Gentiles *of good will*, by different and special means. In a word, before the coming of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost infused grace into souls, but not with that constancy, regularity, splendour, and fulness, which he was to display in the government of the new Church. This marvellous *effusion of the Spirit upon all flesh*, foretold by the Prophets,‡ was to be the consequence of that coming of the Holy Ghost, which the Son would obtain from the Father, and which he promised to his apostles on the eve of his passion. *I*

\* Acts ix. 7.

† Acts xv. 28.

‡ Acts ii. 16—21.

*came forth from my Father, he said to them in his sermon after the Supper, and I came into the world, behold now I leave the world and return to my Father . . . and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever ; the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him ; but you shall know him, because he shall abide with you, and shall be in you. . . . But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. . . . It is expedient to you that I go ; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you ; but if I go, I will send him to you. . . . I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now ; but when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. . . . He shall glorify me . . . in the same manner as I have glorified thee, O Father, upon earth.*

I may here point out a subject of meditation to the Catholic philosopher who desires to rise on the wings of faith to the contemplation of the universal system, which unites the created to the Increated.

As it was love that inspired God to create the world and man, he of course created them to his own image and likeness, for the property of love is to reflect and reproduce itself. We may therefore expect to find in the creation and regeneration of the world some resemblance to the Divine generations.

What do we behold in the increated, eternal Being ? First, the Father, the Beginning without a beginning, the original Focus of Divine, but as yet indeterminate life. Shown to and reflected back on himself by the Word that emanates from him, the Father together with the Word produces the eternal Love. This completes the Divine life, which life altogether consists in the indissoluble union of infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love.

What is to be seen in the material creation ? First, the creative power which produces the dark chaos containing all elementary matter in a state of confusion ; secondly, the disposing power—the Word, who calls forth light, clears the chaos, and arranges all things ; lastly, the *Spirit of God*, which having *moved over the waters* \* from the beginning, as if to endow them with fecundity, embraces and completes the work of the Father and the Son, through which it diffuses and maintains life.

Hence these mysterious words of the Psalmist : *By the word*

\* Genesis, i. 2.

*of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them (their life), by the spirit of his mouth. \**

What is to be seen in the scheme of spiritual regeneration? First, the worship of one only God, the Creator, Preserver, Remunerator, and Avenger, joined to faith in a Redeemer whose nature remains unknown.

Men soon wander from the worship of this one, only God, who reveals himself to them in the most mysterious manner; they wish for gods like unto themselves, and they make *families of gods*. Then the Father sends the Word, his only Son, who becomes man, to teach men that there is a *Divine Family*, and that to rescue from death man, who is created to their image and likeness, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are about to make an immense effort of love. The Word made flesh fulfils his mission, which is expressed in these words of his to the Apostle Thomas: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.*† He is the way by his example, the truth by his doctrine, the life by his death, which annuls our sentence of death, and by the sacraments which he has instituted to impart to us the fruit of his sacrifice on the Cross.

Here we have the basis, the plan, the primary means of regeneration. The Eternal Word has arranged the whole scheme; but who is to preside over its execution? Who is to enter on the painful way, which Jesus Christ has opened to them from the stable to Calvary? Who, but the Paraclete, the Comforter, who, regenerating in the first place those apostles who had abandoned their Master on the earliest appearance of danger, will bring them to rejoice *that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.*‡

Who is to make men understand and love those heavenly doctrines which the apostles and disciples of Christ understood so little and loved still less, even after they had been taught for three years by the Word himself? Who but the *Spirit of Truth*, who is to recall to the minds of the disciples and explain whatsoever the Word hath told them.

Who is to complete the conversion and sanctification of souls by infusing into them the elements of a new life; that divine fire which Jesus Christ *came to enkindle on the earth* in order to purify our souls, and unite them to God?§ Who, but the Spirit

\* Psalms, xxxii. 6.

† John, xiv. 6.

‡ Acts, v. 41.

§ Luke, xii. 49.

of Love, who will *pour forth the charity of God in our hearts*, and thus cause us to *abide in God, and God in us*.\*

You must now, I think, have some idea of the mission of the Holy Ghost in the spiritual world, and understand in some degree its connection, firstly, with the mission of God the Son, of which it was the completion and the continuation; secondly, with the part pertaining to the Holy Ghost, in the creation and government of the universe; thirdly, with the part peculiar to the Third Person in the Divine Essence.

*Ques.*—I begin to understand; but how mysterious all this is!

*Ans.*—Certainly, and it must be so, since the mission of the Holy Ghost has its origin in the abyss of the *Divine generations*, and its end in the regeneration of our souls, another mysterious abyss. But if the nature of this mission remains unknown to us, the fact of its existence is clear to all, on account of the splendid prodigies which accompanied, and the immense results which followed it. Let us glance at them.

When our Saviour was about to ascend to his Father, his disciples, whom he destined to be the *light of the world*, were still so ignorant, that they asked him whether he was not *going to restore the kingdom to Israel*? John, indeed, baptised with water, he answered, *but you shall be baptised by the Holy Ghost not many days hence . . . . . You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth. . . . . And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there was dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? and how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born? etc.*†

At the sight of these wonders, and the marvellous cast of the

\* Romans, v. 5; St. John, i.; Ephesians, iv. 16.

† Acts, i. 5—8; ii. 1—8.

net by which Peter, now a fisher of men, caught three thousand out of this multitude, and transformed them into a community with *but one heart and one soul*, and one common stock, are you not forced to acknowledge the presence of an entirely new spirit among the apostles and their first disciples ?

*Ques.*—Yes ; the fulfilment of the promise of our Lord was beyond question for those who beheld it with their own eyes. Unfortunately, we men of the nineteenth century are at some distance from these marvels, and from the eye-witnesses of them.

*Ans.*—If you are at a distance from these marvels it is your own fault, for they still exist, and I may even say without exaggeration that they are eighteen hundred times more striking now than they were at the time of their first appearance at Jerusalem.

In fact, if you do not hear the chief of the apostles of Christ, Peter himself, speaking at the same time three or four hundred different languages, do you not, may you not, at any moment, see three or four hundred thousand priests, sent by a thousand or twelve hundred bishops, who themselves are sent by the successor of Simon Peter, speaking all over the known world nearly three thousand different idioms, adhering to the same doctrines from age to age without the slightest variation, and steadily holding not three thousand men only, but almost two hundred million in the belief of the same truths, both doctrinal and moral.

Just consider—1st, What naturally are those three or four hundred thousand missionaries, who are one in their teaching? 2ndly, What naturally are those two hundred millions of disciples, who are one in faith? 3rdly, What are the dogmatic and moral doctrines of Catholicism with reference to the natural inclinations of both preachers and disciples ; and you will, I think, understand that such a sight, were it only to last for one year, is at least as wonderful and as inexplicable, humanly speaking, as Simon's sermon at Pentecost.

This wonderful spectacle has been visible for eighteen hundred years. Was I not then right in saying, that it is eighteen hundred times more striking than at its first appearance ?

Ye who have minds to think and hearts to feel, ye who desire to end your doubts in religious matters, devote some few hours of your time to reflection and meditation on the fact of Catholic unity. (See Fact III., chap. 2nd and 3rd.) You will find that there is no other explanation to be given for it than that given by the Catechism : *The Holy Ghost is the soul of the teaching of*

*the Church, as well as the soul of every individual who believes in the teaching of the Church.*

Finally, ye men of the nineteenth century, you have too long listened with admiration to those blind masters, who sought to set up the teaching of *the mind and heart* of man against the teaching of the *Spirit of truth and charity*. And what has been the result? Among great numbers it has been belief in diabolical but highly logical errors, and an equally logical craving to make those errors triumph by fire and sword. Is it not time for us all to return to the foot of the altar, and join our voices to that of the Church: *Come, O creating Spirit, come, and fill our minds with thy Divine light, and inflame our hearts with the fire of thy love!*

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## ARTICLE IX.

*I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.*

### I.—I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*Ques.*—After all you said concerning the Catholic Church in the examination of the third Fact, I have nothing more to ask excepting why belief in the existence of the Catholic Church is made an article of faith, when her existence is a visible fact?

*Ans.*—It is not precisely the material fact of the existence of the Catholic Church, which is the object of our faith, but rather the *divine nature* of that fact. By the words: *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church*, we profess our belief that our Divine Saviour has, as it were, set the seal to his work, and secured the salvation of mankind by the foundation and preservation, to the end of ages, of a Church or religious body which may sanctify, that is to say, may present to all men the pure law of Jesus Christ, and afford them every assistance which can facilitate its observance. We have here, as you see, not only an act of faith in the divine institution and supernatural government of the Church, but likewise a profession (implied at least) of our readiness to submit to whatever the Church teaches and ordains.

Now, this article of faith is fundamental, and therefore was absolutely necessary. Take away faith in the Spirit of Jesus Christ always present in his Church, always teaching, healing and governing souls by the ministry of those to whom he said: *Go, teach, and baptise . . . He that heareth you, heareth me*, etc., and what is the consequence? Faith in all the articles which

precede and follow that one vanishes like mist. Faith itself in Almighty God becomes a fable, and the morality of the Commandments no more than a superstitious and barbarous destruction of the liberty of mankind. For minds capable of connecting two ideas, there never has been, and never can be, any rational medium between belief in Jesus Christ, speaking through the voice of the Church, and belief in oneself alone, that is to say, serious belief in nothing.

*Ques.*—A Protestant would say: I believe in Jesus Christ through the Bible.

*Ans.*—Were the Protestant, holding such language, a really sincere member of the Bible Society, I would first beg him to bring me his Bible, and then I would say: "How do you know, my good friend, that this book, which was translated but yesterday by one of your ministers, and printed in Germany, Holland, or England, is *sent* by Christ to you? Was your Bible (part of which, the New Testament, was not then in existence) in the possession of the disciples who listened to the farewell discourse of our Saviour? If it was in their possession, and supposing that to it Christ addressed these words: *Go teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have told you*, are you entirely certain that it has never been in the least degree corrupted or altered during the fifteen centuries which have since elapsed, and during which popery, according to your theory, corrupted and defiled every thing? Finally, tell me whether your Bible has raised any dead to life to make you admit this first principle of Protestant faith: *The Bible contains the entire religion of Jesus Christ; read the Bible, and you know it all?* For my part, I imagine that I should require to see an entire cemetery of dead raised to life, before I could admit such a dogma. Let us, however, suppose that you, the children of private judgment, believe more easily than papists, and that you admit the divine mission of the Bible without any reason, and even against reason, there is yet another difficulty. Your Bible contains above thirty-four thousand verses. Have the kindness to point out to me the texts which clearly establish the truth of the articles of the Apostle's Creed, a Creed given in almost all your Catechisms. Your theologians have been seeking these texts for more than three hundred years, and not finding them, many have given up both Creed and Bible. Instead of wearying yourself in a search after these texts, you would do much better, my dear brother, to reflect on the meaning of this article of the faith of all Christian ages: *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.*"

This is what might be said to all really sincere members of the Bible Society, which society would be considered the height of religious extravagance, had it any other end in view than the destruction of the Catholic faith.

To any sincere and sensible Protestant, I would say: "Let us cease from discussing your fundamental maxim, and direct our attention to its effects, as exhibited in the light of contemporaneous history. Your fathers of the seventeenth century accused us of exaggeration and injustice, when we said to them: Your principle that *faith in the Bible, understood according to the private judgment of each individual, will insure salvation*, is, in fact, the deification of all the foolish ideas and criminal desires which the mind and heart of man can generate. When your principle has gained ground, and obliterated among yourselves, and weakened among us the grounds of Catholic faith, *the Peasants' War* (from 1524 to 1535) will be renewed on the largest scale, and the higher classes will be massacred, their dwellings burnt, and their wives and property taken possession of, in the name of the religion of the Bible. Were we wrong in what we said?

Do you still dare to complain, and accuse us of intolerance, when we refute the false ideas infused into your minds by your ministers, and give you a true explanation of the everlasting truth: *Out of the Church there is no salvation?* Then be at least consistent, and boldly accuse the three million soldiers who will persist in defending our lives and property, and the honour of our wives, daughters, and sisters against *the freedom in thought and action of Socialism*—accuse them, I say, of intolerance!

How long, O sincere and sensible Protestants, will you refuse to acknowledge the truth of the following axioms?—

The right, at once divine and human, of believing whatever you please on religious subjects, necessarily implies an equal right of doing everything you think you ought to do, especially if you have the power of doing it. It is the height of intolerance to forbid and punish evil, wherever there does not exist some moral authority, divinely endowed with power to define good and evil—to inculcate the one, and deter us from the other. Therefore, out of the pale of the Church established by Christ to teach men what is really evil and what is good, and to inspire them with hatred for the one, and love for the other, there neither is, nor can be, any security for that sound doctrine and morality, and those virtues, by which both soul and body are to be saved in this world and the next.

Although events have greatly abridged our controversy with



heretics concerning the Church, still it may be as well to say a few words on the marks of the True Church.

*Ques.*—What are those marks?

*Ans.*—In the explanations which the Nicean Creed wisely added to the Apostle's Creed, in order to preserve the faithful from the deceits of heresy, we profess to believe in the *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.*

*One.*—I have neither time nor inclination to quote the numerous texts of Scripture which speak of the *unity* of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. I will only give you two points for meditation.

I. What was evidently the object and end of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and of all his teaching, prayers, sufferings, and institutions? Was it not to gather together into one fold, under one shepherd, all those sheep which were so fearfully misled, deceived, and scattered by the hundreds and thousands of false shepherds, who had been sent to them by Satan, the *murderer from the beginning?* Was it not his will that this union of all mankind in the bonds of faith in his word and in his love should be raised to the perfection even of the Divine Unity? *Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are . . . . And not for them only (the Apostles) do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me; that they may all be one, as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me.*

II. What is the greatest spiritual and material want of mankind? Is it not that all may see and understand alike? How can their hearts be united when their minds are divided and opposed to one another? And when their hearts are in opposition, how can their hands be prevented from carrying out this opposition?

There cannot be either moral or religious liberty where the people, for want of a common belief, are at the mercy of any fanatic or visionary.

Reflect upon this, and you will necessarily come to these conclusions: 1st. That the *sine qua non* of social order and liberty is the existence of a Church that is one in her faith and her precept; 2nd. That those who accuse us of remaining in ignorance of the *pure word of Christ* (to speak their language), and say to us: *The will of Christ is for each one to believe only in his Bible,* are either insincere, or inconceivably ignorant.

*Holy.*—The Church of Christ, besides being *one* like its

founder, *one* like the origin and destiny of the men whom she is to lead to the eternal possession of the one God, must also be *holy* and *sanctifying*. We do not, in fact, see, that in founding the Church, our Saviour had any other end in view than *the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, which consists in making us all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ; that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.\** Before all, therefore, this Church must offer to men the self-same unchangeable means of sanctification, faith, sacraments, and the ministers of both, in order that, being freed from the necessity of seeking our religion for ourselves in the Bible or elsewhere, we may at once *do the truth in charity, and in all things grow up in him who is the head, even Christ.†*

You likewise understand that to be *holy*, and above all, *sanctifying*, the Church must not be more puritanical than Christ himself, or say to sinners: "Depart, ye cursed from my bosom!" for if she were to banish all sinners without exception from her fold, it is very probable that she would soon be left without either sheep or shepherds. It is essential that she should never cease exhorting her children to penance, and that in order to refute their vain pretexts, she should place before their eyes a certain number of their brethren who have reached the highest state of perfection; she must be at the same time the merciful Mother of sinners, and the Instructress of saints.

*Catholic.*—To fulfil the designs and commands of her Divine Founder, who died for the salvation of all, the true Church must be so constituted as to exist always and everywhere. She must exist always, from the ascension of Christ, to his glorious return at the end of ages, without any interruption. She must likewise exist everywhere, and display the standard of salvation in all nations, as far at least as the evil dispositions of the people and of their rulers will permit. The Church of the Word has never known those national or individual patronymics which cling like an indelible stain to heretical and schismatical Churches. From the day of her baptism by the Apostles she has ever been saluted by all, whether friends or enemies, with the incommunicable title of *Catholic* or *Universal*. It is true, indeed, that some sectarians of England and the Levant have affected to give their Churches

\* Ephesians iv. 12, 14.

† Ibid, 15.

(which consist of barely the tenth part of the population of a single state) the name of Catholic ; but if they reflect, they must themselves be the first to laugh at so palpable a joke.

*Apostolic.*—Remark that in virtue of that *perfect union* which Jesus Christ asked his Father to bestow on *all those who should believe in him*, and particularly on the ministers of his word and of his sacraments, he always spoke to his Apostles as though they were immortal, and were to preach the Gospel to the whole world until the end of time. The same feeling is likewise apparent in the last words he addressed to them : *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world !*

In fact, the twelve Apostles are not dead : they are the *light of the world*, and their words have never ceased resounding from one extremity of the world to the other ; *they are the salt of the earth*, and their ministry still preserves the divine perfume of Christian virtues. There is not a single Catholic priest, duly sent by his bishop, whom history would not justify in saying : “ I am sent by one of the Apostles, who himself was sent by Jesus Christ, and his Vicar, Peter.” Whoever, therefore, shall dare to style himself a minister of the Gospel, without being at the same time able to show an unbroken line of succession by which the Divine power of the Apostleship has come down to himself, deserves to be addressed in these words : “ Seducer ! begone ; *I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.*”\*

## II.—THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

*Ques.*—What is the *Communion of Saints*, and why is it included in the ninth Article ?

*Ans.*—It is included in the ninth Article, because it is the first and fairest fruit of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. In fact, since the members of the Church form but one and the same mystical body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and the Holy Ghost the Soul, it follows that there must be a real community of spiritual life between them, so that each

\* Those inquirers who now stand at the portals of the Church, perplexed and embarrassed, should say to themselves with St. Augustine (who was himself involved in the Manichæan heresy until he had completed his 33rd year) : “ Shall we hesitate to take refuge in the bosom of that Church which from the Apostolic See, through the succession of bishops, even by the acknowledgment of mankind generally, has obtained supreme authority, heretics raging around in vain, condemned as they have been, partly by the judgment of the people themselves, partly by the authority of Councils, partly also by the splendour of miracles ? To reject her authority is truly either the height of impiety, or desperate presumption.”

may labour for the benefit of his brethren, and in turn profit by their labours.

This community does not consist solely in the common enjoyment of the means of sanctification—such as sermons, sacraments, public services, masses, etc., but likewise in the participation of each individual in the merit of all the works of holiness and justice which are performed either by the whole body, by a large portion of it, or by any one of its members; for these works being the fruit of the merits of the Head, and of the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, whoever is united to the Head, and animated by the spirit of faith, hope, and charity, has a just claim to a share in the merit of those good works, in proportion to the extent of his union and submission to Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. The existence of this mystical body, and of the intimate union which connects all its members one with the other, is not an imaginary thing, but the most perfect work of the Saviour, the end of all his labours. What was the intention of the Eternal Word of the Father when he vouchsafed to become man? It was to become the Word, the Representative, the Leader of mankind, and to unite in himself all men who should obey his law, in order that they might *be made perfect in one*, according to his expression, by the communication of his Spirit, his Body, and his Blood. Wherefore? Listen to the words he addressed to his Father: “Thou knowest, Father, *that we are one, thou in me, and I in thee, and those men whom thou hast given me are in me, and I in them, they make but one with me (the God-Man). I will that where I am, they also may be with me.*”\* St. Paul expressed the same thing in these words: “*You are not your own, but Christ’s, and Christ is God’s*; by being subject to the Son, who is subject to God, you will be all in God, *that God may be all in all to you.*”† In all his Epistles, but particularly in those addressed to the Christians of Corinth and Ephesus, the Apostle constantly reverts to the fact of our being *incorporated with Christ* by faith and the sacraments, above all by baptism and the Holy Eucharist, and finally, by the divine fruit of faith and the sacraments: *the charity which is infused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, of whom we are the living temples.* He never seems to weary of describing that divine and yet human body which is composed of all the children of faith under their *Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edify-*

\* John xvii. 21—24.

† 1 Cor. vi. 19; xv. 28.

*ing itself in charity.* You see, therefore, that faith in the *communion of saints* cannot be disputed, without a want of faith in the Church, and an exhibition of entire ignorance of the spirit of the Gospel.

*Ques.*—Why is it called the Communion of *Saints*? Are sinners excluded from it?

*Ans.*—No, certainly, sinners are not all excluded from it; for since the just man himself *falls seven times a day*, perfect sanctity can, in our present state, be only the constant object of our wishes and endeavours. In order to participate in the *Communion of Saints*, and enjoy its advantages, the first degree of holiness is sufficient, that is to say, freedom from mortal sin, or formal disobedience in matter of moment to one or more commands of God or his Church. Such disobedience places a soul in a state of revolt against God, and, consequently, of spiritual death. Yet, even then, the sinner who has not been cut off from the body of the Church by excommunication, remains attached to it as a withered member, and many graces continue to flow upon him through various channels. The instructions he hears, the good examples he sees, the prayers offered for his conversion, and that secret influence which a living body always possesses over even its withered members, all serve as so many stimulants to urge him to arise from his fallen state. He has lost charity, which never can co-exist with mortal sin; but so long as he does not complete his separation from the Church by abandoning faith and hope, he still possesses within him a germ of life which may at any moment, if he so wills, spring up, and transform him once more into a saint, even an eminent saint.

*Ques.*—To belong to the *Communion of Saints*, is it an indispensable condition that a person should be a member of the Catholic Church?

*Ans.*—Yes; he must belong to the Church in one of these two ways: either he must be actually aggregated to the body and soul of the Church, or he must be fully disposed and entirely resolved to enter into her communion the very instant he is satisfied that she is the true Church.

To understand this, you must know that Catholic theology has ever recognized, in the mystical body of Jesus Christ, a body and a soul. The soul of the Church is the union, in different degrees, of all who live in the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is a spirit of faith, hope, and charity. The body of the Church is the assembly of all who exteriorly profess the same faith, participate in the same sacraments, and are governed by the same pastors. Hence our theologians have concluded that

a person may belong to the soul of the Church without being actually a member of her body, in the same manner as many belong to her body without belonging actually to her soul.

The spirit of schism and heresy, which subsists but by lies, frequently accuses us of condemning to eternal flames all persons who are not exteriorly in communion with our Church. When, in order to refute this oft-repeated calumny, we speak of the distinction between the soul and body of the Church, and say to our erring brethren: "You are greatly deceived, and we are shamefully calumniated; we have always acknowledged amongst you a great number of brethren in Christ, and we firmly expect to meet them in heaven, although, unfortunately, through obstacles independent of their will and of our own, we cannot meet here below at the foot of the same altar," when, I say, we hold this or similar language, and even point out persons who, Catholics in soul, are thus spiritually alive in the body of heresy, our distinction between the soul and body of the Church is ridiculed by our adversaries, and, with a disdainful smile, called a very tardy distinction. And if we show them that the most ancient doctors of the Church made this distinction, we are told, that *Popery is very old*.

The distinction between the soul and body of the Church is not only founded on Catholic tradition, but likewise on the general principles of Christianity, and on the words of Christ, these among others: *And other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.\** There are, then, out of the large fold some sheep who listen to the voice of the Eternal Shepherd, whom he considers his own, whom he is desirous to bring, and who are advancing towards the Catholic fold. Still, many of these sheep cannot enter in, some being prevented by death, and others by obstacles which cannot be removed without subverting the laws of general order. What then follows? In virtue of *spiritual* communion, these sheep enter into the fold of *the Church triumphant*, without having been in *exterior* communion with the *Church militant*.

*Ques.*—This doctrine appears to me very probable and consoling, and worthy of the God of charity. Can we know, in any degree, what persons will be saved in this manner in the folds of the innumerable heretical flocks?

*Ans.*—In the first place, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, all children will be saved who have been validly

\* John x. 16.

baptised (even by a pagan), and who die before they have grossly defiled their baptismal robes, or have (not materially, and through ignorance, but wilfully, and with a distinct consciousness of what they were doing), made profession of heresy, that is, have obstinately resisted the known authority of the true Church. If you read the bills of mortality, you will see that such is the fate of half the children born in the bosom of those heretical churches which have retained faith in baptism, or at least administer it validly. Besides these predestined souls, of whose salvation we have not the smallest doubt, we confidently hope that there is in all schismatical and heretical sects, a certain number of adults, who, on account of their entire sincerity, and the good use they make of the truths which still remain in their Church, and which came from the Holy Ghost, preserve their baptismal innocence, or recover it by works of penance and charity, and thus will find mercy at the judgment-seat of Christ. We cannot think that such souls will be condemned for having lived out of the pale of a Church, which they could not possibly have known except by some extraordinary means, which means Jesus Christ, who is the Preserver of the order of nature, as well as the Saviour of souls, has not thought proper to employ.

Such as these, whether adults, whose number is known to God alone, or children who die in their baptismal innocence, are, according to us, animated with the principle of eternal life, and borne to Christ by his legitimate spouse, through *the ministry of concubines and servants*, according to the expression of the fathers, particularly of St. Augustin.

Finally, Catholic faith, hope, and charity go farther still. Supported by the Divine words, sung by choirs of angels over the cradle of the new-born Saviour: *Peace on earth to men of good will*, and by many other words and facts recorded in Scripture, we believe that there have been, and may always be, even in the midst of the darkness of idolatry, *men of good will*, who, having made a good use of the common lights of conscience, and the extraordinary lights of the Holy Ghost, have raised themselves, like the Centurion Cornelius, to the knowledge and love of the true God, and the performance of works of charity.\* We might say, with St. Thomas Aquinas, that rather than leave the work of their sanctification unfinished, God would, if necessary, send them an angel; but, without rejecting the notion of this great doctor, we think that if, for reasons known to himself alone, God did not see fit to employ this means, those *men of good will*

\* Acts, x.

might be purified both from the stain of original sin, and from the defilements of actual sin, by an act of that perfect charity, which, being *the fulfilling of the law, covereth a multitude of sins*,\* and always includes an implied desire for baptism, and for all the regular means of sanctification.

You see, therefore, that *the Communion of Saints*, in the sense in which we understand it, is truly *Catholic*, for it includes all the servants of the true God, whatever the circumstances of time or place, or whatever the moral and social condition in which they have lived, or are still living. But it extends even farther.

*Ques.*—How far?

*Ans.*—It follows its members whithersoever they go, so long as they do not, by mortal sin and final impenitence, separate themselves from the company of the saints, and descend into those regions whence the return to hope and charity is impossible. The Communion of Saints is, in fact, simply the everlasting society of the friends of God, a society beginning here below, on the field of battle and trial, continued in that place of temporal punishment called *purgatory* (the temporary abode of souls that depart indebted to Divine justice, which they must satisfy before they can enter into the possession of the kingdom of perfect purity), and, finally, consummated in the everlasting city of heaven. These three divisions of the mystical body of Jesus Christ are known under the titles of the *Church triumphant*, the *Church suffering*, and the *Church militant*. But you must remember that, in reality, these three churches are but one. They are but one, because the saints in glory, the saints in purgatory, and the saints on earth, are closely united to each other under their one head, Jesus Christ, and live one common life, derived from this head, and from the sanctifying spirit, which life is charity itself, perfect in the saints in heaven, imperfect as yet in the saints in purgatory, and far more imperfect in the saints on earth; but still, in each, the same Divine charity which Jesus Christ came to enkindle on earth, and *which is infused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost*.

By meditating upon these principles, which are the very soul of Christianity, you will perceive the justice both of the devotion we express and feel for our glorious brethren in heaven, and of the efforts we make to relieve our suffering brethren in purgatory.

We are benefited in a thousand different ways by the labours

\* St. Peter, 1st Ep. iv. 8.



of the saints who are in glory ; we are perfectly certain that their charity, which was so great even when they were among us, must be increased to an infinite extent now, when they are reposing on the bosom of the God of Charity ; and that nothing can equal their tenderness for their brethren, who are still balanced between eternal life and eternal death. How, then, can we abstain from publicly expressing our gratitude to them for so many benefits, and confidently invoking their intercession with our Divine Chief and Father ?

Among these saints, there are some whose unusual sanctity, manifested by extraordinary, miraculous, and heavenly signs, and by the unanimous voice of nations, has been solemnly sanctioned by the Church : now what can be more worthy of a Christian than to honour and invoke those whom God thus honours ? There are innumerable troops of other saints whom we do not know by name. There is not, in fact, a single family among those nations which have remained firm in the true faith, which has not every right to hope that numbers of its ancestors and relations are in heaven. Hence the great and natural favour in which the festival of *All Saints* is held. Finally, can we forget, without doing violence to Christian charity, and to our natural feelings, that there are many of the dead to whom we owe much, although we did not know them personally ; that there are many others whose imperfections and weaknesses we not only knew, but often occasioned ; and many dear relations and friends, who at the moment of death said to us with falling tears : " Forget us not before the God who is about to judge us ; we hope in his mercy, but oh, how much is owing to his justice ! "

Even if Scripture did not tell us that *it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead*,\* even if Catholic philosophy did not prove to us that the souls in purgatory, from the very fact of being united by charity to souls in heaven and those on earth, must profit by the prayers of their triumphant brethren, and by the prayers and good works of their militant brethren, nature alone would inspire us *to pray for the dead*.

Besides, who does not see that this incessant *commemoration*, both of those saints who are reaping the fruits of their holiness, and of those who are expiating their smallest weaknesses, is an admirable school of virtue ? You know, therefore, what to think of the fierce Reformers of the sixteenth century, who rent asunder the Church on earth, and by abolishing devotion to the

\* Mac. xii. 46.

saints, and prayers for the dead, consummated their rupture with the mystical body of Jesus Christ, of whose members the most perfect, and certainly the most numerous, are in glory, and the least imperfect in the place of temporary punishment.

When you meet with any sincere person who is labouring under the unhappy prejudices which were first excited by the guilty Reformers, say to him: "My dear brother, you apparently believe that your soul will be judged by Jesus Christ; tell me, therefore, how you expect to justify, at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge, the strange and inconsistent conduct of your churches *in lauding to the skies, and honouring in every possible way, such persons as Luther, Calvin, Beza, Zuinglius, or Elizabeth, whilst you totally forget the Mother of Jesus, the Apostles, and the Martyrs?*"

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## ARTICLE X.

### *The Forgiveness of Sins.*

*Ques.*—What is understood by these words?

*Ans.*—By them we profess our belief that *the Holy Catholic Church*, whose office is to establish and spread *the Communion of Saints* all over the world to the end of time, has received power from her Divine Founder to change men, who one and all are sinners, both on account of the original sin in which they were born, and on account of the bad use they make of their liberty, to change them, I say, into saints, by the forgiveness of their sins.

Our spiritual regeneration, *our sanctification*, is *the will of God*,\* and the object of all his works, whether moral or physical, particularly of that super-eminently excellent work, the mission of the *only Son* of God, and of the Holy Ghost. Now, the primary condition for our recovering a life of grace, and that holiness which is essential to the character of the true children of a thrice holy God, is the destruction of sin which has deprived us of spiritual life, and made us *children of wrath*.† On this account, the prophets of the old law hailed the coming of the Messiah, the *holy of holies*, as the happy period when *transgression would be finished, and sin have an end*, when *iniquity would be abolished, and everlasting justice brought among men*.‡

\* 1st Eph. to the Thes. iv. 3.

† Ephes. ii. 3.

‡ Daniel ix. 24.

- The spirit of error, which ever remains the same in the midst of its everlasting changes, still repeats to the holy Church what it said to Jesus Christ: "You pretend to forgive sins; *what blasphemy! who can forgive sins but God alone?*"\* "Yes," we answer, God alone can forgive sins, and therefore did Christ, when communicating that divine power to his apostles and their successors, promise *as God*, that he would always abide with them both in person and by the Holy Ghost, whom he would send them. Scribes of the New Law! you are constantly boasting of your knowledge of Scripture; have you never read in your Bible the following words, which are only a few out of many others equally explicit? *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. . . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. . . . As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, saying: Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*†

If the champions of heresy were not filled with that spirit of ignorance and insincerity which the father of lies infuses into all his ministers, they would see two things—first, that it is a fearful blasphemy against Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost to deny that *the power of forgiving sins* exists in the Church, for the Church being *holy and sanctifying*, exists, and in fact can exist, solely by and for the exercise of this power; secondly, that this power is exercised in various ways—first, by baptismal regeneration, which purifies the person baptised, not only from original sin, but also from any other stains he may have contracted; in the next place, by the sacrament of penance, which is *the second plank after shipwreck*, and a *baptism of labour*, as many of the Fathers call it; finally, by *extreme unction*, of which the Apostle St. James is speaking when he says: *And if he (the sick person) be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.*‡

We may leave to theologians the task of proving these things, and conclude by a truly philosophical reflection: *Men cannot be made to advance in virtue unless they believe in the forgiveness of sins.*

*Ques.*—I do not clearly understand the reason of that.

*Ans.*—I will soon explain it to you. When I speak of *virtue*, I mean Christian virtue, which consists in the knowledge and

\* Mark ii. 7.

† Mat. xxviii. 18—20; John xx. 21—28.

‡ St. James v. 15.

practice of the entire law of Christ. I am not, therefore, speaking of those *respectable individuals* who, after a completely sensual, animal life, say on their death-beds: "I have neither stolen, murdered, committed adultery, nor set fire to my neighbour's property, therefore I shall appear with perfect confidence before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge!" I am speaking of those souls who are sufficiently enlightened to understand that something more than freedom from these enormities is required for leading a life such as Jesus Christ requires from those who aspire to enter into life eternal. Now, I say that these chosen souls cannot enter the paths of Christian perfection, or make any progress therein, unless they are relieved from this fearful doubt: "I have every reason to fear, nay, I even am certain, that I have sinned and offended God; can I securely hope that I am now in the right path, and that I need only persevere in order to advance and be confirmed in the friendship of God?" So long as this doubt, which is most painful in the most virtuous, is not removed, there is no true life in the soul, there is only anxiety, fever, agitation, and agony, which agitation, according to the age and character of the person, becomes a sort of delirium, or degenerates into moral atony and consumption.

In those separated churches which have abolished the tribunal of penance, ardent souls, the inhabitants of still more ardent bodies, have sought for extraordinary means of conversion, or rather of becoming certain that they possess the *spirit of God*.

Furious preaching, accompanied and followed by dances, *galopades*, wild gestures, and cries, until men and women fall exhausted in one confused mass on the ground, are plans often followed in the United States, and elsewhere, to obtain the descent of the *spirit of Christ*. Those who have studied on the spot these famous spiritual exercises, commonly called Revivals, find much fault with what goes on in them on the score of morality. Be that as it may, all those persons who have leaped and howled until they have lost their senses, and received the *spirit of Christ*, may consider themselves as saved, whatever happens to them afterwards, according to the Calvinistic dogma, that *grace once received can never be lost*; a dogma which reassured the Protector Cromwell on his death-bed.\*

\* He (Cromwell) believed a doctrine which was admirably adapted to calm and sooth the fears of his conscience. "Tell me," he said to Sterry, one of his chaplains, "is it possible to fall from the state of grace?" "It is not possible," replied the minister. "Then," exclaimed the dying man, "I am safe; for I know that I was once in a state of grace." And, in this conviction, he prayed, not for himself, but for the people of God.—*Lingard's History of England*.

As for those persons who are preserved from fanaticism by their age and habits of reflection and virtue, their feelings will resemble those of the learned and virtuous Protestant, Albert Haller, as described by his co-religionist, the minister Stapfer. "Haller, at the end of his life, was filled with the utmost terror when he thought how soon he was to appear before a tribunal from which there would be no appeal. The ministers of the Gospel, whose company he eagerly sought, could not succeed in dispelling the gloomy thoughts which filled his mind, and which he daily noted down in a journal published since his death. It appears that he never had, like Pascal, that feeling of peace which is the portion of a Christian who is sure that he is pardoned, and is filled with joy from the effect of the emotions of Divine love; his doubts, not concerning the objects of Christian faith, but concerning his own spiritual condition, never seem to have wholly deserted him."\*

How many noble souls among our erring brethren are suffering from those doubts which embittered the old age of the virtuous Haller! Say to them: "End all your perplexities and sufferings by meditating on the ninth and tenth articles of the Creed, which you recite as well as we, and come and listen to that Church which, from the time of the Apostles, has ever taught her children to repeat these consoling words: *I believe in the forgiveness of sins*. You deeply feel the want of some one sent by Christ, to say to you: "Go in peace, brother, thy sins are forgiven; think of nothing now, but how, *by good works, to make thy calling and election sure*."† Since that is one of the things after which your soul craves, do you not feel that it must be one of the institutions left to his Church by *the Good Shepherd who has given his life* for the salvation of your soul? If you reject opportunities of being instructed in this most important matter, you will be accused by the cry of your own conscience at the tribunal of your Divine Master, and, as St. Paul says, you will be *condemned by your own judgment*. ‡

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## ARTICLE XI.

### *The Resurrection of the Body.*

*Ques.*—No doubt you are already acquainted with the countless objections raised against this article by modern incredulity,

\* *Mélanges Philosophiques, Littéraires, etc.* Par M. P. A. Stapfer, t. i. p. 454.

† First Epis. of St. Peter, i. 10.

‡ Epis. to Titus, iii. 11.

which fancies that it is physically impossible on more than one account.

*Ans.*—Yes; I am perfectly well acquainted with all such impossibilities, from the physical impossibility in which Almighty God will be placed by cannibalism, of restoring all the constitutive elements of the bodies of persons eaten, without leaving the bodies of the persons who eat them incomplete, down to the geographical impossibility of there being room for all the bodies that will rise again, I do not say in the *Valley of Josaphat*, which is comparatively about as large as your hand, but on the whole surface of the globe. The demonstration of these impossibilities by wits of the day made so deep an impression upon our fathers and grandfathers (who were deeply learned in physics and metaphysics, as is well known) that some Christian scholars, Charles Bonnet among others, thought it their duty seriously to refute it. It is proper to observe that nine-tenths of these objections had nothing new in them, save the scientific cant in which they were clothed, and that they had all been expressly refuted by the Catholic doctors of the first ages, particularly St. Augustin.\*

As in our day, these objections and the scientific arguments on which they rest, can be seriously discussed only by fools, you will allow me simply to make one reflection founded on common sense.

Since Almighty God did not consult the physicians and geometricians of Voltaire's time, concerning the best method of making all human bodies issue from that of Adam, it is probable that he will not have recourse to them to raise these same bodies out of the dust of the earth.

We shall all rise again in our own flesh, in the same manner as we have all been created in our own flesh, by a very simple act of infinite wisdom and infinite power. In order reasonably to dispute the resurrection of our bodies, we must first prove the impossibility of their creation, which would truly be the height of absurdity.

*Ques.*—I understand that. I now only wish to ask you what is the philosophical link which connects the dogma of the *resurrection of the body* with the other articles of faith.

*Ans.*—The human body is not a prison into which the soul has been cast in punishment of some former crime, as certain philosophers of antiquity fancied, but is an integral part of human nature, which nature consists in an immaterial, intel-

\* Among other works, see his *Enchiridion* or *Manuel*, ch. xxvi.

ligent, free soul, united to organised matter. The body is at once the sign, the pledge, and the instrument of the eternal destiny of man, and of the sublime functions of the head of the material universe, forming the connection between the world of matter and the world of spirits, as I have shown elsewhere. \* The soul separated from the body is an imperfect being, although closely united to her heavenly Father, and *inebriated with the plenty of his house*. † Nothing can extinguish her desire to be joined once more to the companion of her labours, and to enjoy their common reward in union with it. Hence that species of impatience with which the martyrs, according to the writer of the Apocalypse, call for the day of judgment, and for the restitution of the *blood* which they shed for *the testimony*. ‡

If the body, in its present state of weakness and corruption, is a terrible clog upon the soul desiring to live a spiritual life, if it forces that soul to desire and sigh for the moment which will *deliver it from this body of death*, § the reason is, because sin has wrought so fearful a change in the original composition of man.

How admirable is the manner in which divine wisdom makes our regeneration conform to the law which presided over our degeneration!

The souls of our first parents having revolted against God, and thus been separated from the Author of Life by sin, their bodies, by a natural consequence, revolted against their souls and tended to a separation from them. Instead of remaining impassible and immortal, they became subject to suffering and death; but through the mercy of God, who deigned to pardon them, they did not die until several hundred years afterwards.

In like manner, our regeneration begins by our souls. When they are reconciled to God by the *forgiveness of sins*, they live a real life, that immortal life which they imbibe from Jesus Christ, their head, with whom they are *incorporated*, so to say, by the gift of the Holy Ghost received in baptism, and strengthened by the other sacraments, and by the practice of virtue. In this stage of a Christian life, our souls can duly govern our bodies, mortify their vicious inclinations, and make use of them for works of holiness and justice; but they can no longer, as in the state of original innocence, impart to them an immediate immortality. They must die, and only after the lapse

\* See *La Science de la Vie*, tom. I., leçon. xxii.; *La Science Sociale*, tom. I., ch. ix.

† Apoc., vi. 9, 10.

‡ Psalms, xxxv. 9.

§ Philippians, i. 23.

of a longer or shorter number of ages be associated to the eternal and blessed life of the soul. In short, you see that the *new life* commences with the soul, and does not accomplish the restoration of the body until long after, in the same manner as death first began by destroying the soul, and spared the body for many ages. You may see now, why, in the Creed, *the resurrection of the body* immediately follows the *forgiveness of sins*, of which it is a necessary consequence.

*Ques.*—Will not the damned also rise again ?

*Ans.*—Yes ; their bodies will rise again, but neither their bodies nor their souls will partake of that *life hidden with Christ in God* \* which they did not possess at the moment when they were called from the place of trial. *We shall all indeed rise again*, says St. Paul, *but we shall not all be changed. . . . Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap ; for he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting.* †

Since the Apostles' Creed was intended for the faithful to recite during their painful journey here below as a hymn of faith, hope, and charity, it was not fitting that that fatal resurrection in which the bodies of the damned would reap the sad fruit of their crimes should be mentioned. No doubt, the children of faith never cease fearing so melancholy a fate ; but this fear, which alienates them from sin, is in itself powerless to make them *run joyfully in the path of the commandments*. They require the blissful thought of that glorious transformation which will cause their flesh, a victim here below to the laws of Christian mortification, to become a *spiritual body*, as the Apostle says, perfectly subject to the soul, traversing space with the rapidity of thought, reigning like a monarch over all matter, and surpassing in brilliancy all the suns in the heavens.

The incredulous may smile at such an expectation ; it matters not—*The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God.* ‡ But this expectation is necessary for the purest souls, who may feel the assaults of the *angel of Satan* in their flesh a hundred times a day, and require to address their bodies in language like that used by St. Francis, of Assissium : “ Be patient, and labour, little brother ! But a few days more trial, and thou shalt enter into eternal joy ! ”

\* Colossians, iii. 3.

† 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 51 ; Galatians, vi. 7, 8.

‡ 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, ii. 14.



## ARTICLE XII. AND LAST.

*Life Everlasting.*

*Ques.*—By *life everlasting*, do you mean only the eternity of bliss, or do you also include the eternal existence of the damned?

*Ans.*—This article is, as it were, the crown of all the rest, particularly of the eleventh, and must be understood in the same sense as the latter. By these two last articles, we profess to expect with faith, hope, and charity, the glorious resurrection of our bodies, and the supreme perfection of the life of our souls, through their intimate union with their last end, God, and with their servant, the body. Thus will all our desires be entirely satiated.

On the contrary, the damned being for ever separated from the primary source of order and life, will remain a prey to the inextinguishable fire of disunion—disunion between the faculties of the soul, which will be in a state of everlasting opposition; disunion of the soul and body, between which peace can never be made; disunion among all the wretched inmates of hell, where, as the Scripture says, *no order but everlasting horror dwelleth*.\* Finally, disunion between the damned and all creatures which are armed by the Eternal Judge, for the revenge of his enemies.† What more can such an existence be than a never dying, an everlasting death? For death, as the Greeks well explained it, is in fact nothing but division.

*Ques.*—It is gratifying to find that the composers of the Creed have not named the frightful dogma of hell, and I admire their good sense.

*Ans.*—Reserve your praise for some better occasion; for the miserable inmates of hell are mentioned in the article where we profess our faith in Christ, who will come to judge the living and the dead.

If, when explaining the seventh article, I did not say much on this point, I am now quite ready to supply the omission. It is true, we do not make in that article an express profession of faith in the eternity of the sufferings of the damned, and certainly a special article on this subject would be out of place in

\* Job, x. 22.

† Wisdom, v. 18—21.

the second part of the Creed, which treats only of the redemption, as I observed at the beginning of this book. The place, logically speaking, of the dogma of hell would be in the fourth part, where *everlasting death* might have been added to the twelfth article, or have formed a thirteenth. I have already given one reason why the composers of the Creed have not inserted this dogma, and I now proceed to bring forward a second, founded like the first on the very nature of the Creed.

What is the Creed? It is, as I explained before, the *rule* or *standard* of Christianity. It does not contain everything that we believe, completely and in detail, but it is a compendium of those articles of faith which are peculiar to Christianity. It was therefore necessary that it should express faith in the Father Almighty, Creator of all things; in the Incarnate Son, the Redeemer and Supreme Judge of all mankind; in the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier; in the Holy Catholic Church, whose office is to form the Communion of Saints, to dispense the forgiveness of sins, and through those means to conduct us to the *resurrection of the body* and *life everlasting*. These dogmas distinguished the religion preached by the apostles from all false religions, and even from the only true religion which then existed in the world, the Creed of which consisted simply of faith in one Almighty God, and in a future Redeemer. As for the dogma of the eternity of the sufferings of the wicked, there was no need to insert it in the Creed, considering that it had been the universal belief of all nations from time immemorial.

*Ques.*—Is that quite certain?

*Ans.*—It is not only a certain fact, but a fact proved in so many books as to be notorious. Any schoolboy will show you in the sixth book of the *Eneid*, that Virgil and his contemporaries believed in *eternal punishment*. The readers of Plato can cite passages from the *Georgias*, and the book of *Laws*, in which the great philosopher expresses his faith, and that of his master, Socrates, in the *frightful torments which incorrigible souls will eternally suffer*. Finally, Plutarch, in his book on the *Tardy Revenge of the Gods*, is, to say the least, as terrifying as the Gospel in the description he gives us of the endless punishments inflicted on great criminals, and the temporary sufferings destined to purify such souls as are susceptible of cure. It will be sufficient for me to quote here the words of one of the most talented and ancient of the enemies of Christianity. "The Christians," says Celsus, "are right in thinking that those who lead holy lives will be rewarded after death, and that the

wicked will undergo *eternal punishment*. Moreover, this opinion of theirs is held *all over the world*.\*

Does not such universal faith in this *frightful dogma* reconcile you to it in some degree?

*Ques.*—I must own that there is something very imposing in such universal belief. I can however explain it by remembering to what a system of terror the ancients were obliged to have recourse, in religion as well as politics, in order to govern mankind, before the universal reformation made by Christianity. But what is to me inexplicable is, how you can reconcile faith in eternal punishment with faith in that heavenly Father who, the Gospel says, is *charity*.

*Ans.*—No doubt, those objections against the eternity of hell, which in former days had no weight whatever, now exercise great influence over reflecting minds, since faith in the Gospel has more fully made known to man the infinite treasures of divine charity. This is the observation of an apologist of our own day, whose excellent work I cannot sufficiently exhort you to read and study; for it unites elevated, profound, and extensive religious philosophy, to the utmost theological exactness.† But without entering into so long a dissertation as would be necessary for absolutely demonstrating the truth, I hope to be able to show you that these objections are only founded on a very false and narrow-minded idea of divine charity, and that the *frightful dogma*, when viewed in its right place in the divine system, appears to a sensible mind so indispensable a portion of that system that it cannot be removed without causing the downfall of the whole.

In the first place, let me ask whether you believe that God, without compromising his wisdom and goodness, may have created *man to his image and likeness*, and ordained that although he did not always exist, yet he should possess an imperishable existence, and exist for ever, like his heavenly Father?

*Ques.*—Yes, I do believe it, for I have no faith in nonentity. A horror of non-existence, and desire of immortality are so firmly implanted in the heart of man, that no nation can be brought forward as having believed in *an everlasting sleep in the arms of nothingness*. That is the opinion only of a limited number of individuals who have personal reasons for holding it.

\* See the work of Origen *against Celsus*, I., viii.

† *Etudes Philosophiques sur le Chris.* Par M. Auguste Nicolas, Ancien avocat, 2nd partie, ch. viii. Cher H. Goemaere, à Bruxelles.

*Ans.*—Such is in fact the sad wish of some souls ; but it is written that *the desire of the wicked shall perish, that they shall seek death and shall not find it, and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.\**

When you have once admitted the eternal existence of man to be not only possible, but infinitely probable, simply in a philosophical point of view, considering that common sense can see no reason why Almighty God should withdraw from us the gift of existence, I have yet another question to ask you.

Do you consider that decree unworthy of divine goodness and wisdom, as well as of human greatness, by which God has ordained that men should raise themselves from their present miserable state to the perfect life of heaven, not as mere machines, but in a noble manner, as the true children of God, by a path of trial and liberty ; so that the just Remunerator, instead of transporting them like automats into the heavenly city, may be able to say to them on the threshold of that blissful abode : “ Enter, good and faithful servants, I acknowledge you as my own.”

*Ques.*—This decree appears worthy of God, and most honourable to man ; but to what are we not exposed in requiring of man that he should become great ?

*Ans.*—Nevertheless, what is there we covet more than our own greatness ? Can we reasonably complain when the God who exhorts us to become great, stretches forth his hand to us, and says : “ Take courage, my children, for I will be with you, and smooth all difficulties ? ” Besides, if in your opinion men ought to obtain an eternal kingdom without an effort, what strange notions you must have of that kingdom, of God, of his glory, and of dwelling with him for ever. Let us proceed to a third question.

Do you consider that decree as unworthy of God and man, by which the Eternal Lawgiver has ordained that the time of trial shall be limited to the present life, and that each individual on leaving this world shall possess for ever what he has sown and chosen in this life—*infinite good* for him who has, at least at the hour of his death, preferred and loved it ; and *endless evil* for him who has quitted this life attached and devoted to evil ?

*Ques.*—I see clearly to what I should expose myself by answering, “ No.” But I may smooth all difficulties by making a distinction ; and I reply : Yes, it is most worthy of God to give *infinite happiness to the good* ; but I think it would also be

\* Psalms, cxi. 10 ; Apoc., ix. 6.

most worthy of his goodness if he were to say to the wicked : " You have abused the gift of existence, and wished for nonentity, behold I now withdraw existence from you, and give you nonentity."

*Ans.*—In a purely rational point of view, your solution of the difficulty is not absurd, I grant ; but still I maintain that the solution constantly given, not only by Christians, but also by *the whole world*, as Celsus says, is much more acceptable, philosophically speaking. I will only give two out of many reasons.

1st. Why should God repeal those decrees, so worthy of himself as well as of us, by which he ordained that men should exist for ever, and that most of them (all who do not quit this life before attaining the use of reason) should co-operate by their own free will, in the decision of their eternal fate ? And in favour of whom, I ask, would you have God thus repeal his own decrees ? In favour of those miserable wretches who, by their abuse of the blessings of life, made sport at once of his threats and of his promises. If you put foolish sentimentality aside, you will perceive that philosophy could scarcely imagine such complaisance, or rather weakness, in that Supreme Lawgiver who alone can say, "*Man may change, but I change not.*"

2ndly. If you once admit a doubt on this capital point, however frightful a picture you may draw of your temporary hell, or of the gulf of nothingness, the strongest of all moral restraints is broken, and true moral education, deprived of its most effective argument, has lost its influence over depraved man. I defy any Christian moralist worthy of the name to dispute this fact. Among a hundred other testimonies, I will quote that of a philosopher of the eighteenth century, who was a Christian only during his last illness. "Fatal experience," says the academician Thomas, "proves that the doctrine of eternal punishment, however terrible, is not too strong for deterring us from committing crimes. This punishment is therefore proportioned to the end the Supreme Legislator had in view, which was to prevent as far as possible disobedience to his laws. If it is proportioned to this end, it therefore is not unjust. Experience, by proving its necessity, proves also its justice."\*

*Ques.*—I feel how conclusive these considerations are, but still what proportion can there be between sins which last but a moment and eternal punishment ?

*Ans.*—I have not at present time to prove a thing undisputed

\* See his *Réflexions Philosophiques et Littéraires sur le Poème de la Religion Naturelle*.

by any moral philosopher—*i. e.*, that there is nothing *momentary* in the interior act by which the soul resolves, of her own will, to violate, knowingly, any important point of the divine law; that by such an act we say to God: "*I will not obey thy law,*" and that if death surprises the criminal in this state of open revolt, the Supreme Judge has every imaginable right to say to him: *Thy will shall be done; thou wouldst have nothing to do with me, I also will have nothing to do with thee.*

I have neither the time nor the wish to prove here what I have already shown elsewhere, by arguments which competent judges have decided to be entirely conclusive, that it is not God who eternally punishes his enemies, but his enemies themselves, who with their own hands prepare their endless torments, by the determination to exist away from God and without God; and that as their eternal misery is strictly proportioned to the distance which they placed during life between themselves and the source of all good, they will have no possible right to complain of divine justice, and can only curse their own folly, and the authors and accomplices of their crimes."\* This much, however, I will say: Meditate carefully on the three questions I have asked; reflect for a few moments on our moral character, and on our marvellous inclination for all that flatters our three principal passions—pride, avarice, and sensuality—and you cannot fail to understand that without the dogma of hell, so clearly and repeatedly laid down in the Gospel, it would have been vain to have preached in Europe that moral law, which has rendered it the centre of civilization and enlightenment. Until now, however, we have been reasoning only as philosophers, and we have not glanced at that view of the case which is best calculated to dispel all doubts concerning the two eternities which await us.

*Ques.*—To what view do you allude?

*Ans.*—To Calvary. Look upon the Son of God as he hangs upon a Cross between two thieves. His body is one entire wound; but I invite you above all to contemplate the far deeper wound of his soul, and to meditate upon these words which escape more from his heart than from his lips: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

You ground your objections against the eternity of hell on the charity of God. Behold then that charity displayed before the eyes of the world in the clearest light. What do we see?

\* See *La Solution de Grands Problèmes*, tom. I. ch. xxiv.—xxvi.; *La Science de la Vie*, tom. II., leçon. xxx.

We see, in the first place, so great is the charity of God towards men, that in order to cleanse them from those stains which render them unworthy of the society of their heavenly Father, his charity did not hesitate to deliver up the body and soul of his only begotten Son to the most fearful humiliations and tortures. In the next place, that this divine charity which holds our iniquities in such abhorrence, will reject without mercy all those who, by their obstinacy in sin, shall *have trodden under foot the Son of God, and esteemed the blood of the testament unclean*, and that there shall remain nothing but *the rage of a fire*, as St. Paul says, *to consume the adversaries*, who would not be purified in the flames of divine love.\*

Enough on the subject of this awful dogma, which, by itself does not raise men to perfection, but without which sinners will not begin to serve God, beginners advance courageously in the paths of sanctity, or both the perfect and imperfect be preserved from relapsing into sin.

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## CONCLUSION

### OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE composers of the Apostles' Creed have accomplished by twelve articles what the most famous thinkers and lawgivers of the whole world have never been able to do by books and laws sufficiently numerous to cover the entire surface of the globe—the orientation of mankind.

By establishing the brilliant pharos of the Creed, not on the basis of ever changing reason, but on faith in one God, through Jesus Christ, and on faith in Christ, through the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, they have rendered it immovable, unchangeable, and capable of *enlightening every man who cometh into this world*.† Thus have they terminated the sisyphus-like torments of the human mind, of that Danaïs, styled *Rationalist Philosophy*—torments which cause a man when he is done to begin, and when he leaveth off, to be at a loss—torments which, if natural philosophy can never attain perfection, leave moral philosophy (alone indispensable) at its rudiments.

Thus have they satisfied the first want of a moral agent, and fulfilled the condition without which nothing could induce him to keep the commandments of God. These commandments we are now about to study.

\* Hebrews, x. 26—29.

† Ecclesiastes, xviii. 6.

## BOOK III.

## THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE CHURCH.

*Ques.*—What part in the religious system have the Commandments of God and the Church?

*Ans.*—The study of the Commandments will show you that they contain the entire religious system. Religion has but one end, to keep us walking in the road which leads to eternal life. *If you will enter into life, keep the Commandments,\** are the words of Christ. Before descending to details, let us give a glance at the whole, and consider the admirable unity which makes the Ten Commandments of God form but one single command.

The *Decalogue* was divided by God into two *tables*.† The precepts of the first, which are three in number, treat of our duty towards God, and bear the mysterious seal of the adorable Trinity.

By the first, the Almighty Father claims that adoration and supreme love which are due to the sole source of life and being.

By the second, the Word, who is *the brightness of the glory* of the Divine Essence,‡ forbids every word and act contrary to the profound respect due to the infinite Majesty of God.

By the third, the sanctifying spirit commands us to study and imitate the sanctity of God, considered in himself and in his works.

The second table contains *seven* precepts, another mysterious number, and one often employed in the Scriptures to signify *all things*. These precepts, which, in fact, comprise our every duty to ourselves, to our neighbour, and to all creatures, may be reduced to three, which present an exquisite analogy with the precepts of the first table, and with the three Divine persons.

In fact, by the first (*Honour thy father and thy mother, &c.*), we are commanded to honour human paternity, the pro-creator of the civil and domestic family, and an image of the Creating Paternity, being, like it, the source of all order and life here below.

By the second (*Thou shalt not kill*), which is closely connected with the fifth (*Thou shalt not bear false witness, &c.*), the Word of

\* Mat. xix. 17.

† Exodus xxxii. 15.

‡ Hebrews i. 3.



truth, *by whom all things were made*, and who deigned to be *made man*, orders us to respect and love the image of God, which has been impressed on all creatures, on ourselves, and on our neighbour. He forbids every word and act to the prejudice of man, in whom he has been pleased to unite the image of God and the image of the universe, in order that he might be the *Word of the Word*, the Word of God to creatures, and the word of creatures to God.

By the third (*Thou shalt not commit adultery*), which is connected with the fourth, sixth, and seventh (*Thou shalt not steal . . . nor covet thy neighbour's wife . . . nor his goods*), the spirit of holiness and love regulates the intercourse of our soul with living and with inanimate matter. He requires so noble a mistress as our soul not to degrade herself and become the slave of her body, or of any other bodies. He, therefore, forbids every thought, desire, or action, which might trouble the heavenly harmony that ought to subsist between our souls and our bodies, between ourselves and our brethren. This state of harmony is incompatible with sensuality and theft, which are acts of high treason against the sovereignty of God over the soul, of the soul over the body, and of the body and soul over exterior things.

These ten Commandments of the Decalogue, which we have thus reduced to six, are also comprised in the two following : *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart . . . this is the greatest and the first Commandment. And the second is like to this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. And these two Commandments, on which depend the whole law and the prophets,\** become one in charity ; for charity, which causes us to *abide in God, and God in us,†* prevents any opposition (on matters of any importance) between the Divine Will and our own ; and it causes us to love all that God loves, and to practise all that he commands. Hence, as St. Paul says, *charity fulfilleth the law.‡*

The short explanation of the Commandments of God which we are about to give will fully justify this introductory review of the Book of the Divine Law.

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### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

I AM THE LORD THY GOD, WHO BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE  
LAND OF EGYPT, AND OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.  
THOU SHALT NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME. THOU

\* Mat. xxii. 37—40. † 1st Ep. of St. John iv. 16. ‡ Rom. xiii. 10.

SHALT NOT MAKE TO THYSELF ANY GRAVEN THING, NOR THE LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR IN THE WATERS UNDER THE EARTH. THOU SHALT NOT ADORE THEM, NOR SERVE THEM.

I.—*Does the Catholic Church obey the first Commandment?*

*Ques.*—Is there not some truth in the accusation of Protestants, that the Catholic Church does not obey the first commandment? It expressly says: *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth;\** whereas she allows the use of images.

*Ans.*—When Jesus Christ was questioned by the Pharisees—*Master, which is the greatest Commandment of the law?* he answered: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment.* This mode of rendering the first Commandment given on Sina appeared so just and reasonable to the Pharisees, that they were struck dumb.

The Catholic Church is, therefore, right in looking upon the words you have quoted as a local and temporary interdiction, which was laid upon a half idolatrous nation, surrounded by people who adored everything but the true God. Resting on the interpretation given by her Divine Master, she concluded that the world, illumined now by the bright sun of Gospel revelation, would adore God in spirit and truth; and that the necessity of forbidding the legitimate use of the plastic arts, painting and sculpture, for religious purposes,† had ceased. The prophets of the sixteenth century, Carlstadt, Zuinglius, and Calvin, who were condemned on this point by the arch-prophet, Luther, judged otherwise. Armed with the words: *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, etc.*, they destroyed and burnt an infinite number of the masterpieces of Christian art, and speedily converted the churches into temples, as naked as a barn and as chilling as an ice-house.

It was not the fault of those ferocious bigots that about the year of the world 5530 Europe did not return to the state in which it was 1500 years before the Christian era.

\* Exodus xx. 4.

† The crucifix is to the eye what the words *Jesus crucified* are to the ear. Both alike serve, only by means of different organs, to awaken in the mind the remembrance of the Saviour who died that we might live. Tr.

And what have been the effects of this more than pharisaical puritanism on Christian piety and public morality? The effects have been most deplorable. The fine arts being excluded from those temples in which they ennobled themselves by concurring to the adoration of the living God, have been degraded, and have assisted in a general degradation of taste, manners, and thought, by the re-construction of the temples of the long-buried gods. Yes, the fine arts, which, when inspired by Catholicism, beheld in the flesh nought but the organ and sensible form of the mind, and in the material world nothing more than a symbol of the invisible world, are reduced to that Pagan inspiration, which employs all the powers of the mind in immortalizing the beauties of the flesh, and in transforming the universe into a temple of idols.

The Pagan worship of the visible and the nude, which was first re-established by the Hellenists, is indebted for its most unfortunate progress to the manner in which the churches were stripped by Protestantism in the classical land of Christian Esthetics, Germany. Goëthe and his school cursed the moral revolution which had substituted *the pale and sickly virgin for the Venus of the ancients, and the attenuated figure of a crucified man, hanging by three nails, for those perfect ideals of the human body represented by the statues of the Gods of Greece . . . .* Goëthe had a colossal head of Jupiter placed by his bed side, in order that he might address his morning prayer to it on awaking from sleep! Hegel deplored the fact that the spirit of poetry was extinct since *the religious chimeras of the Galilean had triumphed over the exquisite religion of the Greeks!* Louis Feuerbach, the head of the schools of young Germany, expressed, in a thousand different terms, his horror for the *supernaturalism of the superstitions of the Gospel*, and invited his readers to adore *nothingness and death*, rather than Christ. Of Feurbach, it has been said that he must be *Antechrist himself, if the end of the world were to take place in the nineteenth century!*\* Such are the fruits produced in Germany by the blind hatred of the first Reformers to Christian Esthetics.

Since the imagination exercises the most irresistible influence over our souls, a religion which does not become the mistress of this faculty is nothing better than an abstract idea, and if it nevertheless persists in imposing laws, it becomes at once hateful and ridiculous. See, therefore, how little account you should make of the vehement abuse bestowed by Calvinism on the corrup-

\* See an article of *La Liberté de Penser*, in the Number for the 20th of November, 1830, on the Doctrines of German Anti-christianity.

tions and idolatry of Popery, and of the foolish praises which it is for ever lavishing upon the authors of a most senseless reformation. Let us return to the great precept. When inculcated in charity, which is itself the whole law, this first precept contains the germ of all the truths that are to be believed, and all the virtues that are to be practised. Its object is to destroy that error which produces and fosters all other errors, and that vice which generates and strengthens every other vice. Do not, therefore, regret employing your time in the study of this Commandment, of which study I will draw the merest outline in the following paragraph.

II.—*How the First Commandment destroys the greatest of errors and the greatest of vices.*

*Ques.*—What is this error which produces all other errors ?

*Ans.*—It is the idea that there is more than one God, or that if there is only one, our own *adorable* person may be that one God.

Preposterous as it may seem, that such an idea can be entertained by a reasonable being who cannot disguise to himself that but yesterday he was not, and that to-day he is only an atom, endowed with thought, in the ocean of existing beings, it is nevertheless certain that every soul, on its entrance into the world, is imbued with it. It cannot, in fact, be got rid of without great and unceasing efforts. Even when the mind is entirely convinced that it is the most outrageous folly to make a god of oneself, still the heart is secretly flattered by the idea, and interrupts itself twenty times a day in the very act of adoration. Those saints who were the furthest advanced in Divine love, and in contempt of themselves, never ceased to lament the impious and sacrilegious inclination of their souls to usurp the place of the Most High, bewailed it before God, and implored him to deliver them from it, at least for a few moments before they left this world.

Yes ; that error is truly the one which gives rise to all other errors, and the focus of all our deviations ; and he who is not aware of the existence of this focus in his soul must always have lived out of himself, and been exclusively occupied in the worship of his own flesh.

This is the error which caused the downfall of him who, among the angelic intelligences, first *stood not in the truth*, but

became *the father of lies*, by saying: *I will be like the Most High*.\* This is the error which caused the downfall of our first parents, who were seduced by the words, *you shall be as gods*. This is the error which, after having covered the globe with idols and inglorious deities, disengaged itself from the follies of idolatry, only to fall a slave to those of pantheism and atheism, and declare "all religions to be but the offspring of human folly; that there is no other god but the world, and no other world but the one which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands!"

Finally, this is the error which fomented and exalts the father of all vice.

*Ques.*—I suppose you are alluding to pride?

*Ans.*—Yes; to that pride of which it is written, that *it is the beginning of all sin*, and that *he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions*, and that *it shall ruin him before the Lord*.†

The everlasting mania of the proud man is, in the first place, to make himself equal to God, and in the second, totally to deny the existence of any God but himself. Once in possession of divinity, he necessarily requires a religion, and the religion of the proud man consists in three things:—

1st. He adores his own mind. He acknowledges the existence of wisdom nowhere but in himself. His reason is the *light of light*, the *authority of all authority*, the *sole authority* to which he *pays any deference*. If he is sufficiently candid and logical to follow out the inspirations of pride, and express them clearly, he will soon fall into paroxysms of rage and folly, which will cause him to say to God, with the author of the *system of contradiction*: "Begone, lying spirit, imbecile God, thy reign is at an end! Seek for new victims among the beasts."‡ God being thus dethroned, the conqueror has nothing further to do but to occupy his place, and receive the homage of the universe. In fact, mankind, whom he has just taught that "God is nought but folly and cowardice, hypocrisy and deceit, tyranny, misery, and evil"—mankind, I say, in gratitude for such a benefit, ought necessarily to say: "That being who has taught us no longer to remain what all men have hitherto been, *senseless, cowardly animals, tyrannized over by deceit and hypocrisy*, deserves our praise, and the true God is the Atheist Proudhon." If the proud man goes no further than deism, he will deny revealed religion, only for the sake of having a right to reveal a natural religion. If, like the heretic and the schismatic, he admits the

\* Isaiah xiv. 14; John viii. 44.

† Proudhon, *Sys. des Contradictions*, ch. viii.

‡ Eccles x. 15.

§ *Ibid.*

Christian revelation, he will deny the Church the right of interpreting it, and assume that right himself.

In short, the atheist denies the existence of God only to make a god of himself; the deist denies that God has revealed a religion only to reveal one himself; the heretic and schismatic rebel against the Church of Jesus Christ only to arrogate to themselves the glory of founding Churches. Atheism, deism, heresy, and schism are the usual forms under which proud spirits worship themselves, and obtain the worship of others.

2nd. The proud man adores matter. Since the atheist is determined to see nothing beyond the present life, since the deist is ever in doubt concerning a future state, since the heretic and the schismatic when once out of the pale of the true Church are *tossed about by every wind of doctrine*, it is impossible that their affections and desires should not turn exclusively towards the things of this world, and that they should not prefer the happiness it can bestow before those future invisible blessings on the existence and acquisition of which they calculate so little. Even when pride does not go so far as to throw any doubt on the promises of the life to come, it is still the father of cupidity. As the sole aim of the proud man is to aggrandize himself as much as possible in the eyes of his fellow men, and as in this world, where money rules with despotic sway, a man meets with deference and honour in proportion to the length of his purse, so he becomes covetous, if not by inclination, at least by system. Now, is avarice aught but what it is styled in the Gospel, a real *serving of idols*, and a transfer of the religious service and worship due to God alone, to money and material objects? \*

3rdly. The proud man adores his own flesh. He idolizes his own person, and cares but little for his soul, even supposing he believes that he has one; consequently, he bestows his entire attention upon the well-being of his body. His body is the God that is to be served in the very first place, clothed like an idol, lodged sumptuously, fed with the most exquisite productions of the earth, and glutted with enjoyments. Even supposing this frantic worship of a single man sacrifices many victims, and deprives numbers of the very necessities of life, what does it signify to the proud man? As he flatters himself that his mind is superior to the minds of all other men, so also does he believe that the bodies of all others ought to be sacrificed to the worship of his own.

\* Luke xii. 34; xvi. 13; Ephes. v. 5; Colos. iii. 5.

The whole religion of pride consists in *infidelity*, or contempt of faith, by adoration of our own thoughts ; in *covetousness*, or the adoration of riches ; and in *sensuality*, or the adoration of our own body. With a little reflection, you must, I think, easily perceive that the worship of all the seven capital sins mentioned in the Catholic Catechism is contained in this religion.

*Ques.*—Yes ; it is clear that pride, avarice, luxury, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth, are all comprised in infidelity, covetousness, and sensuality, which three vices are, in their turn, contained in pride, that father of every vice.

*Ans.*—Hence you must perceive that the first Commandment, by ordering us to adore God alone, and love him above all things, lays down the greatest of truths, and destroys at once the greatest of errors, and the greatest of vices. We will now show that it produces the greatest of virtues.

### III.—*How the First Commandment produces the greatest of virtues.*

*Ques.*—Which is the greatest of virtues ?

*Ans.*—Christian humility, defined by St. Bernard to be a virtue which, by causing man to know himself, renders him contemptible in his own eyes.\*

Humility is an habitual feeling of the heart and conviction of the mind, with regard to the greatest of all truths—viz., that there is but one God, the Creator and Lord of all beings, and that *he made us, and not we ourselves* ; † to him, therefore is due all the glory of whatever good there is in us, and to us is due all the shame of the evil which we have wrought in ourselves. It is the counterpoise of pride, which builds the edifice of vain glory on the foundation of ignorance of God and of ourselves, and therefore causes us to glory in our good qualities and works, and to disguise our faults and vices, even though we may not go so far as to transform them into virtues.

Humility, far from degrading, elevates a soul, by teaching it the secret of true greatness. In the first place, it shows us the truth, and obliges us to acknowledge ourselves what we really are, beings formed out of nothing, and existing only through the Divine goodness. When we once thus clearly perceive the truth, God is with us. *He is high*, says St. Augustine, *if you humble yourself, he descends to raise you up, but if you exalt yourself, he flies far from you.* ‡ He is most desirous to shower his gifts upon us, but is jealous of their right appreciation ; *he resists*

\* *De grad. humilit.*

† Ps. xcix. 3.

‡ Sermon on the Ascens.

*the proud, and gives his grace to the humble.\** Never will he swerve from that rule which he has made known to us by the mouth of his only Son, who *humbled himself even to the death of the cross*: "*He who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*†"

*Ques.*—It is certainly beyond question that well-regulated humility, by which we acknowledge our weakness, our misery, and the infinite greatness of God, is at once a virtue and a duty. But is there not reason to fear that if you preach such excessive contempt of self, men will fall into cowardice; and that self-esteem, the source of all activity and personal greatness, will become utterly extinct in them, owing to too great a distrust of their own strength?

*Ans.*—Self-esteem must be founded on true knowledge of ourselves, otherwise it will be the source of countless deplorable illusions. Now, humility imparts this valuable knowledge, without which there can be nought but error and folly in us. It causes us first to reflect upon our origin, to descend into the abyss of nothingness in which we were once engulfed, and to consider how our existence became *real*, instead of simply *possible*. When it has caused us carefully to examine the fact of our having been drawn out of nothing, it says to us: "You now believe and know something at least; consider, therefore, in the next place, *who are you?* For the last twenty years you have spoken about your mind, your talents, your heart, your ideas, your feelings, your thoughts, and all your superior and inferior faculties, together with their various functions: it is now time to explain how all this can exist within you; how these numerous, mysterious, and conflicting powers can produce within you the double phenomenon of the life of the mind and that of the body, whilst your person still remains but one. You have completed your course of study, and have long been listening to the teaching of that philosophy which is called *the science of sciences, the knowledge of the first and last causes of all that exists*. I am not asking for an exact definition of all existing things, but only of yourself."

When once this study has clearly convinced us of the nothingness of all human science, humility shifts her ground, and says to us; "If you do not know what you are, you cannot at least be ignorant of all that you have done from the day when you first acquired the use of reason, and became conscious of your liberty. Examine, year by year, day by day, and hour by hour,

\* Cath. Ep. of St. James, iv. 6.

† St. Luke xviii. 14.



what has been the employment of all your spiritual and physical faculties, and then see, before God, what you ought to think of them." If your examination is conscientious and searching, even though you do not find that you have fallen into those enormous crimes which degrade a man in the eyes of the world, still you will be forced to acknowledge that you have ample reason to exclaim: "O God! how hast thou borne so long with such a worthless servant?"

When humility has thus taught us, in making the inventory of our lives, to assign to God what is his due, and to ourselves what belongs to us, it will be impossible for us not to exclaim with the psalmist: "O Lord, *my substance is as nothing* (or what is worse, is evil) *before thee; and now what is my hope? Is it not the Lord? and my substance is with thee.*" Then do we begin to make a correct estimate and a good use of the gifts we possess. As the lives of the proud, who say: *we will magnify our tongue; our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?*\* are empty and barren, so the lives of the humble are full, and abounding in good works; for the humble appreciate the infinite value of time, and believe in the terrible account they will one day have to render at that Judgment Seat, where no evil, not even a single idle word, will be forgotten, and where every good action will be rewarded, even to the glass of cold water bestowed upon the thirsty.

In truth, is not the universe indebted to the inspirations of Christian humility for the most heroic labours ever accomplished on earth, and for institutions which are an honour and consolation to humanity? If the apostles, who considered themselves as *the off-scouring of the world, and rejoiced that they were thought worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus*,† had been men less filled with contempt of themselves, and indifference for the esteem of others, the immense moral revolution brought about by the preaching of the apostles would have been utterly impossible. If the Christians of the three first ages, who so courageously braved the hatred of the whole world, had been men less superior to human respect, and ready to yield to anything rather than incur the displeasure of Cæsar, of the great ones of the world, of the people, or of their own families, is it not evident that Christianity would never have been able to outlive the apostles? If those evangelical heroes, for the most part unknown to us, who by incalculable labours and sufferings reduced to order the confusion of the middle ages, and substituted unexampled

\* Ps. xxxviii. 6—8; Ps. xi. 5.

† Acts v. 41.

civilization in the place of fearful barbarism, had resembled our philosophers, and, entirely occupied with their own glory, had offered incense to the very vices of the great, and committed all the crimes so eloquently condemned in their writings, what would have been the result? Europe, a prey to exterior and interior barbarism, would have been divided into a few pashalics, where, instead of schools, universities, hospitals, monasteries, and convents, we should behold thousands of seraglios and harems, supported by the labours of millions and millions of slaves.

And do you imagine that Christian humility has lost its divine energy, or its wonderful fecundity in our own day, and that its works dread comparison with the works of philosophy? Compare two well-known lives which were passed—the one in contempt, the other in adoration of self.

*Ques.*—To what lives are you alluding?

*Ans.*—To the lives of the holy priest Vincent of Paul, and of the philosopher Jean Jacques. I need not describe in detail the works of the first. The wonders of his charity, which aimed at relieving all present and future suffering, could never be explained, except by this beautiful maxim of St. G. Thaumaturgus: *God dwells in a soul according to the extent of its humility.* His humility, like his charity, was boundless. When the holy old man had reached the end of a career, the virtues of which would have been sufficient to glorify a hundred priests before God and man, he yet could not find words to express his contempt of himself, and the pain he felt at being praised.\*

Let us now listen to the philosopher hurling against God and man this incredible defiance in the first page of the book of his *Confessions*: “I have unveiled my interior, such as thou, O Eternal Being! thyself dost behold it. Let the innumerable crowd of my fellow men assemble around me; let them listen to my confessions . . . . and then let a single one say, if he dares: *I was better than that man!*” And what had been that life which he thus dared to lay open before the eyes of God and man, to be judged by them?

He himself owns that it was a series of childish, contradictory, base, deceitful actions, and one perpetual act of self-adoration.

\* A most virtuous prelate, seeing the humility of Vincent in all things, could not help telling him that he was a perfect Christian; upon which the humble servant of God exclaimed: “O Monseigneur! what do you say? I a perfect Christian? Rather ought I to be looked upon as a lost soul, and the greatest sinner in the world.”—*Vie de St. Vincent de Paul*, par Abelly, ch. xiii. sec. 1.

It was filled with contempt of the most sacred family ties, and of those of marriage. The philosopher filled the hospitals set on foot by Vincent for foundlings, with the young victims of his immorality, and love of ease. Who can tell to what an extent the prisons, where Vincent revived repentance and virtue, were peopled by the instrumentality of the apologist of vice and fanatical blasphemer, who declared that the Christian religion was more Anti-social than that of the Lamas, or of the Japanese! Nor is this all; we yet owe more to this *tender-hearted reasoner*, who cannot bestow a single word of praise upon those admirable virgins consecrated by Vincent to the relief and service of every species of misfortune, but who can fill whole pages with language to form a *Héloïse*, or a *Sophia*; women who issue from the temples of vice only to be precipitated by justice into the convents of crime. We are indebted to him for the ferocious doctrines of the *Discours sur l'inégalité* and the *Contrat Social*, two books, of which it has been truly observed, that they have been the cause of the cutting off of more heads than they contain letters. We are, in short, indebted to him for *Emile*—that is to say, for a plan of education which substitutes *children of nature*, believing only in themselves, dreaming of nothing but enjoyment, and fearing no other hell than that of labour and want, in place of the children of God and of the Church. Do you think that modern Europe, when threatened by the swords of millions of *Emiles* drawn up by Socialism in battle array, can be saved by anything less than the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotedness which is inspired by Christian humility? And if it falls, will not its fall have been occasioned by all the children of pride, avarice, envy, lust, gluttony, sloth, and anger, bursting forth into fury against all opponents?

*Ques.*—I should say these considerations were of a nature to correct the false idea which the world has of humility. But have you not ascribed the works of other virtues, and particularly of charity, to this virtue, in order to exalt it higher?

*Ans.*—You must know that humility is less a virtue of itself than the source, the root, and the common foundation of all Christian virtues, which develop themselves and are supported only according to the exact degree of depth and power imparted to them by humility. In order that the gifts of God may be confirmed and developed in a soul, that soul must become free and disengaged from self. Humility is the counterpoise of pride, the source of all evil, and therefore it produces all spiritual blessings. I have already shown how pride generates infidelity, covetousness, and lust, which comprise all other vices. You

shall now see how humility opposes—1st. Infidelity, or the adoration of the human mind, by faith, which is an humble submission of our ideas to those of God. 2ndly. Covetousness, or the adoration of matter, by hope, which causes us to desire to possess God, and the invisible happiness of the world to come. 3rdly. Lust, or the brutal and selfish worship of our own persons and flesh, by divine charity, which causes us to love God above all things, and our brethren as much and even more than ourselves. Faith, hope, and charity, the three fruits of humility, express the entire substance of the first commandment of God, and in truth contain the whole essence of religion, together with all the virtues and duties of a Christian.

#### IV.—*On Faith and the duties attached to it.*

*Ques.*—What is faith?

*Ans.*—A supernatural gift, which causes us to believe without doubting all that God has been pleased to reveal to us by his Church. A fact made known to us by faith, and likewise by our own feelings, is that our soul requires superhuman strength in order firmly to believe truths which are superior, and even contrary to our sensual nature, as I have already pointed out to you in the first paragraph of the first article of the Creed. But it is not therefore the less true, that there is a natural inclination in all men to expect religious and moral light from God. Hence proceeds the general belief in a revealed religion, real or supposed. Rationalism—that is to say, the claim to know God and his designs in our regard, solely by the light of our own reason, has never been followed and never will be followed by any save some few deists, sceptics, or atheists, who retain nothing of religion but the name. And since the light of the Gospel has unfolded even to children that divine science which Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle sought in vain, how intolerable is the claim to create or discover the knowledge of God and man, by the power of reason alone! It is so intolerable as to be rejected even by pagans, both of ancient and modern times, as an absurdity!

At the sight of the immense revolution brought about by Christianity and at that of the Catholic Church, which is the greatest and most incontestable of miracles,\* if you still wish to doubt divine revelation, you must bury yourself in ignorance, surround yourself with sophistry, dispute the evidence of history,

\* See the study of the 3rd fact.

and finally, plunge into the dark gulf of scepticism, or feed on the various contradictions of those philosophical systems, of which the unfortunate Jouffroy said, a few days before his death: "Alas, reverend father, all these systems lead to nothing; one good act of Christian faith is worth thousands of them!"\*

Since faith is naturally demanded by the soul, and since Christian faith bears all the marks of truth necessary to convince any upright mind, we need not be surprised that Christ has so imperatively commanded it, and made it the *sine qua non* of salvation, for all who receive his word: *Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned.*†

*Without faith, says the apostle, it is impossible to please God,*‡ and the reason is plain. When the Divine Being, who knows all things, deigns to speak to creatures who know nothing, is it not the duty of the latter to submit their reason to the eternal reason of God? If they refuse to do so, and pretend to know as much and more than God, are they not guilty of the most senseless rebellion, and the most disgusting folly, the folly of pride itself?

Besides, how can we please God, unless we keep his commandments, particularly the first: *I am the Lord thy God . . . thou shalt not have strange gods before me?* Now, how can we love and serve God in the manner he requires, if through not believing his Word, we remain in ignorance of what he is, and what he demands of us? Without faith in the teaching of Jesus Christ, by the mouth of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, you must speedily have as many gods and religions as there are minds among men.

When I remember all I have said in the course of this work, I feel that I have no need to prove here the following axioms: To God alone does it belong to teach us what he is, what we are, and what he requires of us; and to the Church alone does it belong to repeat faithfully to the entire world what God has taught. There is no medium; we must either have Catholicism uniting men in one faith and one worship; or Fetichism, allowing each individual to adore and believe what he pleases.

*Ques.*—Yes, I think I understand that. I now wish to know what are our duties with regard to faith.

\* See the letter of M. Martin de Noirlieu, Curé of St. Jacques, in the *Etudes Philosophiques*, etc., of M. Nicolas, tom. II. p. 259. Second Edition.

† Mark, xvi. 15, 16.

‡ Hebrews, xi. 6.

*Ans.*—These duties may be reduced to three—1st. We must be instructed in our faith. 2ndly. Profess our faith. 3rdly. Preserve our faith.

First, *we must be instructed in our faith.* You must have already observed that incredulity exists only through ignorance. Its most powerful arguments against the existence of a revealed religion fall to the ground on the slightest examination of the historical proofs of Christianity, and its most specious objections against mysteries rest upon a false idea of the Catholic doctrine, or else only tend to prove one thing—*i. e.*, that we do not perfectly understand the Infinite Being and his works, a fact which can astonish none but fools. A man well instructed in the Catholic faith, both in a doctrinal and historical point of view, and yet considering it as inadmissible, would be a prodigy, and one that I am convinced has never been in existence.

Not only is it necessary to be well instructed in our faith, in order to escape the evil of infidelity ourselves, and to be able to combat it in others, but it is also the first duty and most important affair of every man who will give himself the trouble of reflecting a little on the phenomenon of his creation. Why, in fact, are we to pass a few short days here below? *To know, love, and serve the God who has placed us here, and thus obtain eternal life*, answers the Catechism; and *this*, says our Divine Master, *is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.\**

All Rationalists of past or future ages may safely be defied to assign any other end, in the slightest degree reasonable, for the existence of the two hundred thousand millions of men who have preceded us in this weary pilgrimage of life. Their earthly journey and our own will truly be the most revolting mystery, unless it terminates (and such has always been the universal belief of mankind, notwithstanding the half suppressed murmurs of atheism) in a world where everlasting justice dwells, and where each individual reaps according to what he has sown, good or evil.

Now, if eternal life wholly consists in the perfect knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ, ought not the good use of time to consist in *growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?*† Since the just punishment of him *who knows not, is not to be known*,‡ and since our Divine Lord has forewarned us that he will reject the foolish virgins,

\* John, xvi. 3.

† 2nd Epistle of St. Peter, iii. 18.

‡ 1st Corinthians, xiv. 38.

for the single fault of letting the light of the lamp of faith be extinguished in their hearts, and that he will answer all their entreaties by "*Amen ; I say to you, I know you not,*"\* must not every Catholic possessed of one spark of reason perceive, that as a necessary consequence there rests on him an indispensable obligation to obtain sufficient instruction in all things necessary to be believed and practised ?

*Ques.*—What are those things ?

*Ans.*—The principal mysteries of faith contained in the Apostles' Creed, the commandments of God and the Church, the duties of each person's state of life, the Sacraments, which every one is bound to receive; and lastly, some forms of prayer, particularly the *Pater* and *Ave*. Ignorance in these matters would be the more unpardonable in a cultivated mind, because even the most illiterate seldom remain satisfied with so small an amount of religious instruction.

*Ques.*—What means are there of being instructed in faith ?

*Ans.*—The first and most efficacious is that which Jesus Christ established for all, when he said : *Go, teach all nations. . . . He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth him who sent me.*† *Faith cometh by hearing*, says St. Paul, *and hearing by the Word of Christ*, and the Word of Christ is preached by him *who is sent by Christ.*‡ Can any one meditate on the prodigy of eighteen million priests repeating, for the space of eighteen hundred years, in every tongue, and in every degree of latitude and of longitude, north and south, east and west, the same doctrine of Christ, and yet ask whether the disciples of Christ are under any obligation of not suffering his envoys to preach to the empty air ?§

There is a secret force attached to the public and official preaching of the Word as it issues from the living mouth of the pastor, not to be found in the inanimate teaching of books. Far be it from me, indeed, to discourage the reading of religious books, which is another means of being instructed and strengthened in faith ; I only say that the man who can join the public or private oral instructions of his pastor to his own studies, will derive all the more profit from the latter, and never run any risk of imbibing errors from books which may in reality be free from them. Finally, assiduous attendance at public instructions is an excellent way of professing our faith and

\* Matthew, xxv. 12.

† Luke, x. 16.

‡ Romans, x. 14—17.

§ See Book I., 3rd fact, ch. iii.

preaching it to others ; and I may even say that at the present day, it is the duty of a good citizen, and necessary in a social point of view. Who does not now know whither the crowds go, what preachers they attend, and what barbarous festivals they prepare, when the upper classes set them the example of deserting the Churches ?

But instruction, whether received by word of mouth or read in books, before it can nourish and adapt itself to the necessities of the soul, must be carefully digested by meditation. The Word of God meets naturally with so little sympathy from our earthly thoughts and affections, and with so much opposition from all that we hear and see every day, that even were it to flow into our souls regularly every Sunday and holiday, it must still remain barren, unless the labour of meditation and the dew of prayer promote its divine fruitfulness. It is in meditation—that is to say, reflection rendered fruitful by prayer—that those truths which at first are vague, obscure, and cold, become distinct, and send forth rays which burn and destroy all the illusions of the mind, and cause the heart to burst forth into extasies of love, gratitude, and repentance,

Read the writings of those theologians who are more renowned for their talents and learning than for their spirit of piety, and you will find therein less real knowledge of God, of man, and of the world, than in the heart of a poor workman or peasant who is accustomed to reflect before God upon the words of his Catechism, and those of his pastor. How often does not the priest, whose time is divided between study and the sacred duties of his calling, make the same observation as his Divine Master, and exclaim like him : *I bless thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones !* \*

To these three means of instruction—hearing, reading, and meditating—I will add a fourth for men of study : *Let them direct their knowledge to one single end ; the love and knowledge of God.* And this is of far more consequence to progress in science than is generally thought, *for all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God,* that is to say, in whom the knowledge of God does not hold the first place.† It is of special importance to the salvation of our soul, which is *puffed up*, and *tossed to and fro* by knowledge, and exposed even to the greatest danger of perishing in the wild storms of pride, when it is not *founded on charity*. It is also easy and natural to every thinking

\* Matthew, xi. 25.

† Wisdom, xiii. 1.



mind, that does not study like a parrot. What idea can we form either of nature in general, or of each of its parts—man, animals, vegetables, minerals, the stars—unless in the first place we discern in all the work of the *God of gods*, who, after having spoken to man with but little success by his works and by *his prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son*,\* and opened to us the book of universal knowledge. Natural science, by rejecting the teaching of faith, has lost its soul, and is no more than a dead body, the dissection and analysis of which may amuse, but will never elevate the mind. The innumerable volumes which have been latterly published on anthropology, zoology, botany, mineralogy, astronomy, etc., are not to be compared to the single page written by Linnæus, at the beginning of his *System of Nature*.†

The following advice cannot be too frequently repeated to those persons who desire to advance in the knowledge and love of God, and assist others to do the same.

Your principal study, after supernatural theology, ought to be natural theology (a short specimen of which has been given in the study of the first fact). If you do not closely connect invisible truths with visible things, your difficulty will be great in concentrating your attention upon the former, which will then have no influence whatever over your imagination, one of the great powers of the soul.

\* Hebrews, i. 1, 2.

† *Deum sempiternum, omniscium, omnipotentem a tergo transeuntem vidi et obstupui! Legi aliqua ejus vestigia.* . . . . "I beheld the passage of the Eternal Being, who knows all, who can do all, and my mind is in an extasy of admiration! I dared to follow his footsteps from afar off, by the contemplation of his works: what unspeakable perfection, what wisdom, what efficacy was there not, even in the smallest and most imperceptible among them! I beheld the animal world resting on the vegetable world—the vegetable world resting on the mineral world—the mineral world on the earth—the earth revolving round the sun, from which it receives life; the sun turning on its axis, and attracting all the planets in its sphere. I beheld the entire system of the world, the countless multitude of suns suspended in infinite space, imbibing life and movement from the Author of all, from the Being of beings, from the Primary Cause of all effects, from him who governs, animates, and preserves the great works, from the sublime Architect of the Universe. . . . If you call him Providence, you are right, for by his counsels the world is governed. . . . Without him nothing exists. He alone has ordained everything. He it is who, though concealed beneath an impenetrable veil, yet dazzles us by the acts of his Almighty power. By thought alone can we behold him; his essence is not revealed to our senses; the mind alone can know his attributes by contemplating his works, etc."—(*Systema nature, sub. init.*)

Frequently to raise your mind from the consideration of perceptible objects to objects superior to the senses, comparing one with the other, is the method of the Gospel, the method of the saints, and the method best suited to our sensual nature.

Creatures must lead us to the Creator, or else *they are turned to an abomination, and a temptation to the souls of men,\** and experience proves that the changes which take place in the world prevent us from beholding God, as soon as we cease to see in them his divine agency.

Let us now proceed to the second duty concerning faith.

*Ques.*—What is it to profess our faith?

*Ans.*—It is to act always and in all things as a true follower of Christ, and as a respectful child of God and the Church; consequently, never to be ashamed before men of the truths and practices of faith.

If there are some circumstances in which a Catholic is not obliged to manifest his faith outwardly; if there are even some cases in which he ought to screen it from the outrages which an uncalled for exposure would draw upon it, yet in no case, without committing a crime, can he either deny it directly or indirectly, by word or action, or even conceal it, when the glory of God and obedience to the divine law require its open profession.

I need not tell you that the Catholic who is cowardly enough to deny his faith outwardly, on account of the threats or promises of heretics, schismatics, or other enemies of the Christian name, is indeed lost before God. But there is another kind of apostacy, more common and far less excusable, which I must point out to you. It consists in acting and speaking as if we had no faith, *through human respect*, through fear of *what the world will say*.

We may understand a man trembling and shrinking back, when he cannot profess his faith without danger of exile, of the scaffold, of the loss of wealth and liberty; but can we conceive any man so mean, as not to dare to follow his religious opinions for fear of the jeers and the contempt of the most contemptible of mankind, the scorners of religion?

There is but one remedy for this incredible weakness, which causes more religious apostacy than the edicts of the fiercest persecution: and that is, meditation upon these words of the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead: *He that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him the Son of Man shall be*

\* Wisdom, xiv. 11.

*ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels. . . . . Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.\**

In fact; can we meditate upon the awful humiliations which the Son of God underwent in his incarnation, life, and passion, or on the torrent of insults and blasphemies which will be heaped upon him, and upon his followers, to the end of ages; can we, I say, meditate upon *the great price* at which the Son of God has purchased for us the gift of faith, without burning with desire to imitate those Christians who, when questioned by persecuting magistrates concerning their names and rank, answered: "We are *Christians*, and in our eyes this is the most exalted of names—the truest nobility; little care we for any of the titles bestowed upon us by our birth, or by the law!" And how can we ever hope to partake one day of the glory of those countless legions of martyrs and confessors now dwelling in Heaven, if, for fear of being laughed at we forsake that faith which they defended even at the expense of their lives? Thus may we overcome all the weak folly of human respect; thus may we acquire true liberty: Christian liberty. How free, how independent is that courageous Catholic, who says: "It is to me a matter of small importance what is thought or said of me by men who speak without reflection, or say what they do not think! So long as I regulate my words and actions by the maxims of Jesus Christ and of his Church, I have the blissful certainty that the Almighty, his angels and saints, and all men worthy of esteem, will cast a favourable eye upon me. The sneers and blame I may have to endure on account of my strict performance of my duties will one day be an endless source of joy and glory to me, when the crowd of men who have lived without religion will groan forth the everlasting ditty, which the Holy Ghost puts in their mouths: *We fools esteemed their lives madness, and their end without honour, etc.*"†

*Ques.*—How can we preserve our faith?

*Ans.*—In the first place, by acting in accordance with its dictates, and strengthening it by the means already pointed out, viz.: instruction and meditation. We attend to religious truths only so far as we love them; and we love them only so far as we practise them. *True wisdom*, of which faith is the source, *will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins.*‡

\* Luke, ix. 36; xii. 8, 9. † Wisdom, v. 4—14. ‡ Wisdom, i. 4.

If pride is the great enemy of faith, pride's offspring, particularly avarice and lust, are also its enemies. The peculiar property of these two passions is to degrade and blind man, and reduce him to the level of the brutes. Now, *the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God.\** How many unbelievers are there to whom we might say with Pascal—"Forsake your passions, and you will believe!" In the second place, you must avoid all conversations or books against faith, as you would the plague. There is only one reason that can justify attention to the discourses of unbelievers, and that is charity; when a well-instructed person sees reason to hope, that after listening to them, he may in turn be listened to, and thus may dispel ignorance. With regard to books that are contrary to faith, and have been either formally or tacitly condemned by the Church, a Catholic cannot read, or even keep them, without leave; even when he has such leave, Christian prudence requires that he should profit by it, not to gratify curiosity, but solely in order to be the better able to defend religion against its enemies. Whoever, in defiance of these rules, persists in hearing and reading both sides of the question, fancying his soul proof against the poison of error, is a proud fool, who has already lost the gift of faith; for he dares to constitute himself judge between the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ, and that of her enemies. He will soon pay dearly for his presumption, by becoming one of the herd of free thinkers, who are doomed to believe and adore every thing, except what they ought.

In the third place, you must avoid searching into matters of faith through a motive of idle curiosity, knowing that Jesus Christ, by teaching us always through the voice of his Church, has intended to make, not philosophers capable of discussing every subject, but docile disciples, who, by their simple faith and abundant good works, might become less unworthy of one day *seeing light in the light of God,\** and being filled with universal knowledge in the possession of that Divine Being who is knowledge itself.

It is most unreasonable to expect proofs such as we may look for in vain in natural science, (which is but a collection of mysteries, as I observed elsewhere) to be given of the truths of religion. An expectation so unreasonable only exists in minds infatuated by superficial learning, which has the property of keeping us ignorant of the profoundness of human ignorance. Such a disposition leads direct to heresy, and heresy which

\* 1st to the Cor. xi. 14.

† Ps. xxxv. 10.

refuses to believe whatever it cannot understand, must logically fall into the absurdities of atheism; for how can any man clearly understand an eternal, infinite Being? Reason and good sense tell us loudly, that this Being exists; but they also tell us, that he can be known only by those to whom he is pleased to make himself known. In short, if the light of reason clearly shows the existence of God, the light of faith alone can give a clear idea of what he really is.

#### V.—On Hope, and the Fear of God.

*Ques.*—What is Hope?

*Ans.*—It is a supernatural virtue, by which we expect from God life everlasting, and the means of attaining it. Hope is the second daughter of Humility, and opposed to covetousness—the second child of pride. The proud man rejects or forgets the promises of faith, trusts only in his own lights, and esteems and loves nothing but what he sees with his own eyes, and touches with his own hands; it is, therefore, most natural that he should offer adoration to the living or inanimate idols which this earth presents to him. The humble man, on the contrary, adheres to the word of God as to the infallible source of all truth, and quickly beholds a world infinitely superior to our poor planet through the telescope of faith. This eternal, infinite world is God himself, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; that adorable Trinity which was every thing, till through an effect of love, it created the universe of worlds; which still is everything, and will be everything for all eternity, since the universe and all it contains are in existence, only because that adorable Trinity said “*Let them be!*”

This great God declares, that he *loves the souls* created to his image and likeness, and that he is their *reward exceeding great*.\* And how can we doubt that such is the case, when we see the Son sent by the Father, to *humble himself even to the death of the cross*, in order to save us from eternal death, and the Holy Ghost sent by the Father and the Son, preserving for the space of eighteen hundred years that church which has for its only object to put us in possession of the eternal kingdom purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ? Should not faith in the divine promises make us sigh after our eternal abode, and look upon this world as a place of exile, and upon its riches as real evils, except so far as we use them for the acquisition of the sovereign good?

\* Genesis, xv. 14; Wisdom, xi. 27.

Thus does faith, founded on humility, give rise to hope, that foretaste of heaven, which consoled Job on his dung-hill, inebriated the martyrs with joy in the midst of their torments, and sanctified a Charlemagne, a Louis IX, an Edward the Confessor, and so many others, even upon a throne.

*Ques.*—Yes; no doubt, hope is an admirable virtue, most necessary both for that small number of human beings who possess every happiness on earth, in order to temper their joys, and for the countless multitude of suffering souls, in order to wipe away their tears, and elevate their hearts towards a happier future; but is there not reason to fear that this feeling, if too highly cultivated, will inspire Christians with indifference for material interests, which yet are not entirely worthless? May not this reproach be addressed with some grounds to those Catholic nations which have been more fruitful in prodigies of holiness than of labour and industry?

*Ans.*—As this reproach will form the subject of the last part of our conversation, allow me to wave its discussion here. In the mean time, have the kindness to give a moment's attention to what takes place in Catholic countries, and tell me whether it is in order to overcome general indifference with regard to material interests, that Europe keeps near two million soldiers under arms.

For my part, it seems to me, that a holy indifference for the goods of this world, is an indispensable condition for making a proper use of them, and I think that St. Paul was of the same opinion, when in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he said of himself and companions: *We are needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing and possessing all things.\** And in fact, where shall we find men who have caused so wide a distribution of the riches of this world, among so many of the needy, as these twelve poor fishermen? The best use that can be made of riches, even in a social and economical point of view, is to distribute them among the needy. He who loves riches does not act thus; he sees in them nothing but a means of becoming richer still, and in the most abundant wealth but the means of procuring himself every enjoyment; his covetousness makes paupers, his sensuality victims. The saint, on the contrary, who despises gold and silver, employs them in relieving the poor, and in winning them into the paths of virtue. I will quote two or three examples, taken at random, from the Lives of the Saints.

In the fourth century, there was living in Lycia, a young man

\* 2nd Cor. vii. 10.

named Nicholas, who was afterwards the great and holy Bishop of Myra. He became the master of a magnificent fortune on the death of his parents, and distributed it among the poor. Having learnt that one of his fellow-citizens had four portionless daughters, whose beauty and poverty placed them in the way of temptation, he bethought himself of climbing up to the windows of the poor man by night, in order to throw into the room a large sum of money, to serve as a fortune for these poor girls, who, in consequence were very speedily married. A young man of the world would have acted differently, but you must own, that Nicholas certainly consulted his own true interests, and those of this poor family, as well as the interests of public morals. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, my country was governed by a prince whose courtiers were perfectly in despair at his liberality towards the poor, and parsimony towards himself. Although he possessed magnificent forests filled with game, yet he had not one single sporting dog, and his coffers were becoming empty, so frequently did he have recourse to them for alms. When complaints were made to him upon this subject, the blessed Amadeus IX. would answer, smilingly, "What would you have me do? Instead of hunting deer, I am seeking to gain heaven, and the poor are the best bloodhounds and huntsmen to employ in such a chase. As for my coffers, rather than fill them by new taxes, I would contribute for their replenishment everything I possess, even to the collar of my order." It appears to me, that the *packs* of poor who were maintained by Amadeus IX, were somewhat better than *packs* of hounds, and very considerably better than those constitutional *packs* of men who consume the largest treasury, crush the state with taxes, and soon bring it to bankruptcy, both in morals, finances, and politics, amid the loud disapprobation of Europe.

A hundred years later, the extensive diocese of Milan was likewise governed by a great *spendthrift*, St. Charles Borromeo. One morning forty-thousand gold crowns, the price of a principality which had been sold, were brought to him, and yet, that same evening, his purse was empty! "What madness!" exclaimed the wise ones of the world; "how much might have been done with that gold!" Very true, but point out to me any saving Prelate who, during his Episcopate, has enriched his diocese with so many magnificent establishments for education, and for charity, as that holy spendthrift?

Ah! how much is it to be wished, that our states, which are now reduced to poverty, through the ideology of economists, and the speculations of the worshippers of industry, may behold in

their high places, an increase of those holy spendthrifts, the offspring of exalted Christian Hope! By promoting a horror of the enjoyments of luxury, a passion for beneficence, a useful employment of capital, and judicious distribution of wealth, socialism, with all its ferocious atheistical principles, would be opposed by its sole antidote—the divine socialism of charity.

*Ques.*—Why do you join the fear of God to Hope?

*Ans.*—Because hope, without fear, degenerates into presumption;—because, if God is faithful to his promises, he is no less faithful to his threats;—because our God is infinite in everything, in justice as well as in goodness and mercy; and if our minds are weak enough to consider his justice and his mercy incompatible with one another, the Most High is sufficiently powerful to reconcile them.

Faith, in unveiling the eternal world before our eyes, shows us two abodes separated from one another by an impassable abyss; in the one, glory and bliss will endure as long as God himself; in the other, despair, weeping, gnashing of teeth, and the most frightful torments will never end, nor be in the least degree alleviated. Faith tells us: “As much as you hope to enter into the former, confiding in the goodness of God, the merits of his Son, and your own fidelity to his law, so much must you fear to fall into the latter, when you reflect upon your weakness, and upon your sins.”

That the God of Luther should condemn to eternal flames none but the enemies of the Prophet of Wittenburgh, those hateful papists who believe in the necessity of good works, and should open the gates of heaven to those who do not hesitate to *inscribe themselves in the list of the saints, even if they had committed a hundred thousand murders, and a hundred thousand adulteries in one single day*.\* That the God of *respectable people* (*honnêtes gens*) whom Voltaire, when a child, was taught to know, on the lap of Ninon de Lenclos, and of his godfather Châteauneuf;—the God of *Emile*, with whom Rousseau made acquaintance in the course of his connection with Mad. de Warens, and the lost women whom he met on his journey;—that the God of *good people* (*bonnes gens*), created by the Pindars of the abodes of wickedness;—in one word, that the hundreds and thousands of deities invented by ancient and modern paganism should have nothing that can intimidate their worshippers, or restrain freedom of conscience, can be readily understood.

Whilst you are making gods, why not make them according

\* For proofs, see *La Solution de Grands Problèmes*, t. II. ch. xxxix.—xlii.



to your own standard? Why not say to them: "Terrify the cut-throats who threaten our purses, or our lives; but beware of alarming that *respectable man*, who would not rob his neighbours of a farthing for all the world, but who has no scruple of debauching their wives and daughters, who joins in cheating the tax-payers out of hundreds and millions of pounds, and spares no pains in changing a state into a very pig-sty!"

Such is not the case with the God who has created the heavens, the earth, and all their inhabitants, and who governs and preserves them by his own almighty power. The God who weighs and measures every movement of our minds and hearts, with as much care as he numbers the hairs of our heads and the grains of lovely coloured dust on the wings of the butterfly, does not prevent us, whilst we are here below, from inventing gods as easy and as credulous as we please, and even from worshipping them faithfully to the end; but he forewarns us, that an hour will come when all these gods and their countless adorers will not be able to prevent him, *the God of gods*, from sending us to that *fire which shall never be extinguished*, from demanding then with bitter irony: *Where are their gods in whom they trusted?* \* and from *laughing in our destruction*. †

To confirm these threats, and provide us at the same time with the means of avoiding their fulfilment, this great God has sent us *his only Son*, who constantly repeats to us: *Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell.* ‡ I think I have already told you in the explanation of the last article of the Creed, that the sight of the Cross and of the inexorable rigour of divine justice towards the Holy of Holies, destroys all doubts concerning the existence of eternal punishment, and crushes all those sophisms, by which heretics endeavour to explain away the fearful description of it given us by Jesus Christ. This is what has caused, and still causes the most pure and holy souls to tremble and shudder.

Believe me, with regard to the knowledge of God, the testimony of one saint is preferable to the magnificent discourses of a thousand orators, whose lives evince their disregard for the morality and example of the Virgin's Son.

*Ques.*—I have no wish to renew my former objections against the severity of the judgments of God; but I think that in an

\* Deuteronomy, xxxii. 37.

† Proverbs, i. 26.

‡ Matthew, x. 28.

age like our own, if we insist too strongly on this article, we shall only render religion hateful.

*Ans.*—No doubt, it would not be well to confine ourselves to a description of the terrors of religion, but beware of entirely concealing them. Our age more than any other requires a belief in their existence, and consequently must hear of them. Why, in truth, does hell boldly display its doctrines, its projects, and even its exploits, before our very eyes, wherever there is not a number of bayonets sufficient to keep down the demons of secret societies? Why does such a hell exist on earth, if not because faith in the hell of eternity has declined? With regard to those timid souls who might be too much disturbed by fear of the divine judgments, we must say to them: "*Do you desire not to fear God to excess? Cast yourself into his arms.*" Follow the example of the holy doctor (St. Augustine), to whom we are indebted for that beautiful idea; lament your sins; do penance for them; neglect no means of nourishing in your hearts that divine *charity which casteth out fear*, not that filial fear which dreads sin as an offence against the best of Fathers, but that servile fear which hates punishment alone, and dreads but little the torment of the torments of hell, viz., *the impossibility of ever loving, or being loved by the infinitely Perfect Being.*

## VI.—On Charity.

*Ques.*—What is charity?

*Ans.*—A supernatural virtue which causes us to love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God. It is the third child of humility, which tends radically to destroy in us all the offspring of pride, particularly sensuality, which rivets our affections upon the ignoble egotistical worship of our own persons and flesh.

*There remain faith, hope, and charity; these three, says the apostle, but the greater of these is charity.\**

In fact, the Most High God whom faith displays to us as creating and governing the world from amid *light inaccessible* to mortal eye; that God, the possession of whom hope promises us in our future state; that God descends to us, or raises us to himself by divine charity, for he *that abideth in charity*, anticipating the promises of hope, already *abideth in God, and God in him.*†

Faith will vanish with all its shadows, and hope with its

\* 1st Corinthians, xiii. 13.

† 1st Epistle of John, iv. 16.

fears and delays, when God deigns to appear to us unveiled, and unite us to himself for ever; but charity, far from falling away, will expand into sovereign perfection; in the twinkling of an eye, it will consume all the weaknesses and imperfections of our being, and make us eternally *like to our Father, because we shall see him as he is.\**

The virtue of charity urges and encourages us to enlarge the narrow sphere of life, until we are immersed by her in eternal bliss. *The charity of Christ presseth us*, and is filled with indignation that *they who live through him, yet live to themselves*, and not *unto him who died for them, and rose again.†* By her heavenly enchantments, she smooths the paths of the commandments of God and the Church, she strews them with flowers and sweet perfumes, and causes an infinite number of Christian souls engaged in the cares of families, and the occupations of the world, not to walk, but to run therein.‡ To those who observe all the commandments, she points out the path of the evangelical counsels, and says, like her Divine Master to the young man: *If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor, and come follow me.*

On one side, you may see a young maiden born, as it were, on the very steps of an imperial throne, and forming one of its brightest ornaments. Charity whispers to her; “Renounce all thy grandeur, even at the risk of falling under the curse of thy august relations; take this habit, and go, consecrate thy whole life to the instruction of the most wretched children, or to the care of the most disgusting complaints.” The princess obeys, and finds in the humble habit of the daughters of St. Vincent of Paul, a content and a joy unknown to the most richly endowed families.§

On another side, you may see some poor girls who can with difficulty procure themselves even daily bread. Charity whispers to them: “Look at that crowd of desolate old men and women, to you it belongs to procure them lodging and food, clothes and fire, to comfort their declining years, and prepare them for a Christian death.” Instantly, those poor maidens join together,|| and by faith in that Father who made the whole world out of nothing, founded in one single year more hospitals

\* 1st Epistle of John, iii. 2.

† 2nd Corinthians, v. 14, 15.

‡ Psalms, cxviii. 14—32.

§ I will select but one example from hundreds of similar ones, that of the Princess Naraki, the grand-niece of the Emperor Nicholas, and a Catholic, who is now a Sister of Charity at Valenciennes.

|| *The Little Sisters of the Poor.*

than the most beneficent and charitable prince in the course of a long reign.

On another side you may see a young man, who is the hope and idol of his family. To him also charity whispers: "Enter into that religious Order, which is suffering from all the sarcasms, calumnies, and outcries of hatred." And when the young man has entered that Order, she whispers to him again: "Twenty of thy brethren have just perished whilst preaching the Gospel to the infidels. Some have fallen from hunger, fatigue, and bodily weakness; others have been mangled by the executioner, cast into furnaces, and devoured by the savages; ask, as a favour, to be allowed to take their place." He obeys, and you may now behold him hastening to martyrdom with delight.

Charity, that love which surpasses all other love, in the same measure as God surpasses a creature, has also its enthusiastic transports, its fits of holy madness, and its saintly folly, which the world calls fanaticism, but which supersede and prevent the fanaticism of worldly wisdom.

You must be sufficiently well acquainted with the literary, philosophic, and historical productions of our free thinkers, that is to say, of the servile imitators of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, to remember what their opinion was of the conduct of our holy Anchorets, Stylites, and founders of the contemplative and mendicant orders; of their excessive fastings and maceration of the flesh; of their devotion to misery, poverty, and suffering.

*Ques.*—Certainly, I do remember having read magnificent invectives against anchorets, and against the heroes of a monastic life in hundreds of volumes intended for the edification of studious youth, and signed by professors, general inspectors, and eminent teachers. When any of these writers did not openly accuse the monks of having reduced the Roman Empire to a state of imbecility, of having delivered it up into the hands of the barbarians, by their senseless practices, and of having by the same means delayed the dawn of modern civilization some centuries, they never failed, at all events, to describe them as the greatest of fools, and as *the real faquirs of Christianity*.

*Ans.*—Yes; the school of Voltaire will never forgive the monks for having powerfully assisted the Church to destroy the worship of Venus, under its countless variety of forms, in order to substitute in its place the adoration and love of the Eternal Father, of the crucified Son, and of the Holy Ghost, residing in our hearts, together with devotion to the Blessed Virgin and earnest-

ness in the sanctification of our souls. Now, since we have neither the same taste nor the same antipathies, let us place ourselves for one moment between *the faquirs of Christianity*, and the adorers of the goddess Callipygia, look attentively at both sides, and then pass judgment. In the fifth century, St. Simon Stylites, having entered a monastery at the age of thirteen, left it to pass the rest of his days on a pillar at the top of a mountain, where he never ceased praying, except to preach faith in Jesus Christ and penance to the pagans and sinners who crowded round him. Even with regard to public peace and morality, was not such a life better than that advocated by the free thinkers of the day, who say to the people on every side: Life is intended to be devoted to pleasure alone; death is nothingness?" Much the same things are related of St. Patrick, who about that time converted Ireland to Christianity, and changed it into the *Island of Saints*. The free thinkers of the last three centuries, seconded by armies of executioners, have undertaken to reform *the work of the faquir*, and they have been wonderfully successful in changing *the Isle of Saints* into the *Isle of Starvation*.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Europe, having just shaken off the yoke of wild barbarism, was yielding to the elegant but yet more barbarous worship of material enjoyments. Islamism, which had been combatted without, was insinuating itself in various ways into the morals and even the doctrine of our fathers, according to those historians who are the least suspected by free thinkers. St. Dominic and St. Francis then raised the standard of mortification and evangelical poverty, exclaiming: "*All is vanity and folly except loving God, and serving him alone!*" A mighty revolution took place, and the work of civilization began, as it ought, by the triumph of the morality of Jesus Christ, and of the love of God and of our souls, over the ignoble love and egotistical worship of the bestial part of our being.

With regard to the writers who have not been afraid to insult and ridicule those heavenly men whom the whole Catholic world venerates, never lose any opportunity of saying to them: "It is easy to conceive that you understand nothing of the deep affection entertained by those great men for poverty and suffering, that you regard as mad those princes and princesses who following their example were not satisfied with serving the suffering members of Jesus Christ in the poor and sick, but even carried their veneration so far as to kiss the most disgusting sores; that you laugh at their extasies, their stigmas, and their miracles. Your masters of philosophy have taught you

that nature is God, and that man is nothing but a lump of flesh organised for pleasure alone. You are consistent in employing all your talents and energies in embellishing and deifying this philosophy, and in abusing all who combat it. But we who have been taught a philosophy different from that of the stewards, we look upon those as great and noble-minded men, who serve and venerate their crucified God in the persons of their brethren, stretched on a bed of suffering; and on the contrary, we regard those as fools who burn the incense of adoration, and make vows of everlasting fidelity before idols of flesh, which to-morrow perhaps will be carried away by the grave-digger, lest they should infect the atmosphere.

Comparing one ecstasy with another, we certainly must give the preference to the extasies of divine love before the sensual extasies of your heroes of romance. Comparing one kind of stigma with another, the stigmas of St. Francis are at least preferable to those stigmas which your co-religionists display in a certain room in our hospitals, which decency forbids me to name. Finally, if the miracles of our holy wonder-workers have not always converted their contemporaries to virtue, at least they have never changed them into monsters of sensuality and cruelty. Such a miracle was reserved for you, O barefaced insulters of the noblest Christian virtues, and restorers of the infamous worship of the flesh! Whence proceeded those legions of cannibals, who were so lately hankering after carnage and rape?

To what school belonged those chiefs who coolly gave written orders on *the wives and daughters of the aristocrats*? Ah! if you do not recognize the offspring of your philosophical and literary cynicism in these savages, and the children of Christian morality in those brave men who saved you as well as us from their daggers, richly do you yourselves deserve to be branded with that *imbecile fanaticism and stupidity* which you dared to attribute to the civilizers of Europe.

*Ques.*—This lesson has been severe, but perhaps not undeserved.

*Ans.*—Certainly; it is the language of truth and fraternal charity. Charity, in the first place, towards the many souls infected and corrupted by reason of the reputation for knowledge and learning which these wretches have contrived, through the ignorance of their readers, to give each other: charity likewise towards the criminals themselves; for they will never be cured of their unspeakable pride by honied phrases, but may perchance by being plunged and plunged again into that foetid filth which

they are constantly emitting against heaven itself, and all that is most venerable on earth.

Let us now return to charity, and though we have scarcely said anything on an inexhaustible subject, I will conclude by a reflection which, well pondered, will teach you more about the social and religious power of charity, than half a library.

The infidel Hobbes was right in saying that *men are naturally enemies of each other*. St. Augustine also correctly observed: *No being is so unsocial as man by vice, nor so social by nature.\** Let him but direct the desires of his unbridled covetousness to the goods of this world, and he will forthwith be at war with all his neighbours, whom he will strive to disunite, impoverish, degrade, and enslave, that is to say, unless they join together to put him into confinement. How are men to be united, or to be at least induced to bear with one another, and live in peace? There is but one means, answers the same great doctor, and that is to make them love him, who is the Truth, the Beauty, the Sovereign Good. *We may all enjoy this good, he says, in common and on equal terms; there are, in this object of our affections, no bounds, no defects. He rejects none of those who love him, he communicates himself to all, and gives himself wholly and entirely to each. No one can say to another: "Get thee hence, and let me take thy place, think not to enjoy his embraces alone." All can attach themselves to him, and press him to their hearts. He is a food of which all eat without breaking it, a chalice by which each is inebriated without prejudice to the rest.†*

Yes, let us neglect no means of loving God above all things, and causing him to be so loved by others. It is the only means of filling up that deep chasm which egotism has opened between individuals, families, classes, and nations. It is the only means of substituting the divine inspirations of charity for the infernal fury of hatred, envy, and revenge. I will quote one example out of many:

A most charitable Bolognese lady was horrified at hearing that her only-son had been killed in a quarrel. Just as night fell, the murderer being tracked by the police, came and unknowingly knocked at the door of the house which he had filled with mourning, and implored her to grant him an asylum in the name of Jesus Christ. At the sound of that name the lady immediately opened the door, and after having provided for his safety, retired to hide her tears. She passed the night in collo-

\* *Of the City of God*, B. XII. c. xxvii.

† St. Augustin, on *Free Will*, B. XI. c. xiv.

quies with Jesus Christ praying for his executioners, and opening heaven to them, and with the Mother of Sorrows adopting as her children at the foot of the cross, those very men who had fastened thereon the divine fruit of her womb. The next morning, charity had so completely triumphed over nature, that the unfortunate mother said to the criminal: "My friend, justice might find you out even here; take, therefore, this purse, and profit by the means of escape which I have arranged for you. I engage to obtain your pardon, but upon one condition—namely, that you will repair the evil you have done by becoming my son and my heir, for I cannot avoid telling you that I am the mother of that poor young man whom you put to death." \*

## VII.—On Religion, and the Vices opposed to it.

*Ques.*—What is religion?

*Ans.*—It is a supernatural virtue which causes us perfectly to fulfil all our interior and exterior duties towards God.

This virtue does not, in reality, differ from the preceding three, which comprise, as I have already observed, all our duties towards God. By faith we adore God as the sovereign truth, and we take his word as the rule of our thoughts. By hope we adore him as the sovereign good, and the source of all good. By charity we attach ourselves to him as our last end, and love nothing except with reference to him. Is not this the fulfilment, to its utmost extent, of the first Commandment, which was defined by our Saviour as follows: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind?* †

*Ques.*—Is the act of worship likewise comprised in these three virtues?

*Ans.*—Yes, doubtless; for *worship* is, in fact, nothing but the public expression of our faith, hope, and charity: an expression proper to excite, foster, and develop within us these three virtues, which are called *theological*, because their end is to unite us to God, their immediate object. The centre of Catholic worship is the most holy sacrifice of the altar, in which we render to God, through our Divine Head, who is at once our High Priest and our Victim, the duty of perfect adoration, and more honour and glory than our offences and rebellions have ever taken from

\* Taken from the works of F. Segneri.

† Mat. xxii. 36.



him. Both as a sacrifice and as a sacrament the adorable Eucharist exercises our faith in the highest degree, is the source of our hope, *the pledge*, according to the expression of the Church, *of eternal life*, and the furnace by which the divine fire of charity is enflamed and nourished in our hearts, through our union with the God who is its source.

What are the other sacraments, and in general all the practices of worship? They are simply means of producing, fostering, and increasing in us that life of holiness and justice which Jesus Christ came to diffuse amongst men, which the Holy Ghost imparts to all souls docile to the inspirations of grace, and which consists wholly in the internal and external exercise of faith, hope, and charity.

*Ques.*—What vices are most opposed to religion?

*Ans.*—You must already have seen that there is no vice which is not either directly or indirectly opposed to the spirit and works of the three virtues which render us true Christians.

Those especially opposed to faith are: 1st. Infidelity, whether consisting in the total and entire rejection of all revealed truths (and this is *scepticism*), or whether merely making its own selection—believing some, and rejecting others (and this is *heresy*). 2ndly. All voluntary doubts in matters of faith. 3rdly. Ignorance of those truths, both theoretical and practical, the knowledge of which is indispensable. 4thly. All that leads to ignorance, doubts, heresy, or scepticism—namely, sloth in obtaining proper instructions, bad books, wicked conversation, etc.

The vices especially opposed to hope are: 1st. Covetousness, which, entirely pre-occupied by the goods and evils of this life, cares as little for the goods and evils of eternity as if they did not exist. 2ndly. Presumption, which, ignoring the justice of God altogether, expects to arrive at eternal life by a road different from that of penance and submission to the commandments of God and of his Church. 3rdly. Despair, which, overlooking the infinite mercy of God, and the Almighty power of his grace in the soul of the sinner, who, with humble contrition, implores it, says, with Cain and Judas: *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon*; my evil habits are too deeply rooted for me ever to overcome them.

The vices especially opposed to charity are: 1st, Inordinate affections, which cause us to love any creature more than God, or (which comes to the same end) cause us knowingly to violate, in an essential point, any of the commandments of God or the Church. 2ndly. Egotism, which causes us to pass our lives in

the worship of self, habitually forgetting God and our neighbour, and bestowing every thought upon the interests of our pride and vanity, upon our own occupations, and our own amusements.

Among the many vices and sins contrary to religion, it will be sufficient to name: 1st. Formal idolatry, which consists in rendering to any creature whatsoever the supreme worship due to God alone. 2ndly. Any participation in the unlawful worship established by impiety, heresy, or schism. 3rdly. Irreligion, which comprises all deeds contrary to the respect due to God, particularly *sacrilege*, which is any outrage offered to God in persons, places, or things, consecrated to his service; and *Simony*, so called from Simon the magician, who was the first who wished to buy spiritual gifts, and make a merchandise of them. 4thly. Superstition, which appears under various forms, the most criminal of which has recourse to the devil to work miracles (*magic*), to obtain a knowledge of future or hidden events (*fortune telling*), or harm to one's neighbour (*witchcraft*). You will find details on all these subjects, into which I cannot enter, in books which profess to discuss them.

*Ques.*—Yes; and such details are less required in an age like our own, when Satan succeeds more easily in seducing souls by indifference, than by superstition and faith in witchcraft.

*Ans.*—You may be deceived; for a man is never nearer falling a victim to superstition and a belief in witchcraft, than when he throws off all submission to the Church, and abandons the Catholic faith. Such is the opinion of a contemporary author, very learned in these matters, and who, before he consoled the Church by his conversion, and by his excellent writings, had the misfortune to live and write like an infidel. "It perhaps has not been sufficiently remarked, in the midst of the self-interested clamour of the philosophers," says M. Collin de Plancy, "that the only men who are totally free from superstition are the faithful children of the Church, because they alone possess true light. On the contrary, all men who are in a state of doubt, appear to realize the celebrated sentence, that those who are separated from God go astray; for the most unbelieving of their number are also the most superstitious. They reject all revealed dogmas, and, with Johnson, believe in ghosts; with Rousseau, are afraid of the number thirteen; with Bayle, think Fridays unlucky; with Volney, interpret dreams; with Helvétius, consult fortune-tellers; with Hobbes, study the future by arithmetical combinations; and with Voltaire, dread omens. One wise man

spent his time in endeavouring to discover the elixir of life; a celebrated mathematician believed that the elements were inhabited by cabalistic substances; while another philosopher could not tell whether he believed in God, and performed conjuring ceremonies to raise the devil."\*

Men can never succeed in blinding themselves to such an extent as to believe that they are the greatest of beings. If they are not taught by the true religion to acknowledge and adore the Father Almighty, they will seek to have intercourse with spirits, genii, and hidden powers; and, if necessary, they will sacrifice to them even human victims. All the philosophy of Julian the Apostate, was not sufficient to deter him from such horrible excesses. The perplexity into which he was thrown by the Persian war, and by his rage against the religion of the Galilean, led him to murder women and children, in order to discover, in their entrails, *the secrets of the gods*.† As for the lower orders, when once they are so stupified as to believe neither in the God of heaven, nor in the devils of hell, they fall into the power of far worse devils—devils in human form. Comparing one nocturnal meeting with another, I must say I prefer the nocturnal meetings of the ancients (the nightly revels of a few villains), to the nocturnal meetings of the secret societies, where universal public revels are prepared amid streams of blood. I repeat, the only remedy against faith in any demons whatsoever, against the abominable hopes and the homicidal works of egotism, is religion, which by Christian faith and hope, teaches us to love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves.

\* Preface of the *Dictionnaire Infernal*, 3rd edit. Paris, 1844. I knew an old man of more than ninety, who, for fifty years, would never hear the name of God mentioned, but who never went to bed without having said a pretty long and most absurd litany to the devil. (See what I said concerning the superstitions of the present day, in my work, *de l'Education de l'Homme*, ch. ix.)

† See *Dictionnaire Infernal*, art. *Julien*. Nevertheless, it is of this bigotted monster that the learned Montesquieu has written: *There is no other prince so worthy as he was to govern mankind.* (*De l'Esprit des Loix*, L. XXIV. ch. x.) Those Catholic writers who have quoted magnificent passages from Montesquieu in favour of religion, would, I think, have done better to comment upon this sentence, and some thousands of others. Christianity does not need the praises of the celebrated President, but it is proper for Christian readers to know Montesquieu as he really is in his writings—a *very good sort of a man*, who amused himself by making murderous thrusts at religion, whilst bowing, and bending the knee before her.

## THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD  
IN VAIN.

*Ques.*—What are we commanded, and what are we forbidden, by this Commandment?

*Ans.*—We are commanded to render to the holy name of God the deep respect due to it, and consequently to avoid, in our words and actions, all that is contrary to this respect, particularly blasphemy, and all false, unjust, or unnecessary oaths, as also any neglect of promises made to God.

Blasphemy consists in words insulting to God, whether considered in himself or in his works, particularly in his saints.

Swearing, or taking an oath, is an action by which a person takes God to witness to the existence of a certain thing, or that he will perform a certain action. That this may be a blameless and religious act, a person must (according to one of the prophets) swear *in truth, in justice, and in judgment*.\*

An oath, if wanting in *truth*, is false; it becomes the crime of perjury, which endeavours to make God an accomplice in a lie. An oath, if wanting in *justice*, is unjust, and is the crime of him who takes God to witness that he intends to violate his law. An oath is wanting in *judgment* when it is uttered thoughtlessly or indiscreetly; this, though less heinous, is still an irreverence towards the holy of holies. The accomplishment of vows or promises made to God is enjoined by this Commandment. A vow is thus defined by theologians: *a promise deliberately made to God to perform a thing that is possible and proper, and to which the person is not otherwise obliged*.

Leaving to catechists the office of instructing you in the regulations and prohibitions comprised in this commandment, I will endeavour to teach you the extreme importance of this and the other Commandments, under a point of view which has been hitherto often overlooked.

It is evident that the infinitely perfect Being, from whose bounty we have received our very life, and the hope of an incomparably superior state of existence in eternity, has every possible right to require us not to dishonour his adorable name by

\* Jeremias iv. 2.

making it an instrument of sin, or by turning it into derision. But perhaps you are not sufficiently aware that we ourselves are most deeply interested in not allowing this adorable name to be uttered or written by men except with the utmost respect.

*Ques.*—Considering the intercourse we must necessarily have with Almighty God, it appears to me that a person must be mad not to perceive how deeply it concerns us, that such a Master should not be displeased, and that by persisting in employing our tongues and pens at the expense of the respect due to him, we are but preparing scourges for ourselves in time and eternity.

*Ans.*—Yes; but it is as well to know that in order to punish us here below, and to grind us as wheat, God has no need to employ either the elements or the unseen ministers of his justice. He made use of them, it is true, in the case of those infant nations who knew him but little. He opened the flood-gates of heaven, and of the waters beneath the earth, upon the contemporaries of Noah; he rained down fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah; he sent his angels to exterminate his enemies. But with regard to those nations whom he has himself vouchsafed to instruct and enlighten with the very fulness of light, he requires nothing more than their own impious discourses, and the works of their own hands, to precipitate them into the tomb, if they refuse to return to his law.

Let us be deeply penetrated with this thought; the blasphemies which we launch forth against heaven ascend not thither, but fall back upon our own persons, and insinuating themselves into the very marrow of our bones, burn and consume us. Destitute as they are of any power against God, they yet have the faculty of brutalising man, and transforming him into a monster. I will cite but one example out of thousands.

The author of the *Génie des Religions* and *Ahasuérus* held one of the highest professorships; he taught young persons that all religions are but dreams; he made them laugh at the idea of the Eternal Father dying of old age in the solitude of heaven; of Jesus Christ excavating himself a tomb in a frozen star; of the blessed Virgin Mary dying of want; of all the saints struggling in their dusty sepulchres, and bewailing their frustrated hopes, etc. You can easily understand that such sacrilegious buffoonery would not induce the Almighty to withdraw the blessing of life and motion from all created beings, not even from the senseless blasphemer himself. But what is the future conduct of the generation that has dared in mockery to celebrate

the obsequies of God and his Christ? It invents a worship worthy of itself and of its teachers—the worship of unrestrained, unmeasured orgies. And this worship necessarily brings forth that of the guillotine; for how can its followers enjoy themselves at ease until all the partisans of the ancient religion of rank and of property have been decapitated? A day, therefore, will come in which the whole country will be deluged with blood, unless there is a power capable of opposing the new religionists by force of arms, and dethroning their high priest.

Do you now understand the social effects of blasphemy, and what must be expected by those Christian nations who have permitted the instructors of youth to celebrate the obsequies of Christianity for the space of twenty years?

*Ques.*—Yes; and it is probable that the law-givers of antiquity, who were so severe with regard to blasphemy, understood it better than we do. They may certainly be reproached with excessive severity, but to hell alone ought to be reserved the liberty of blasphemy.

*Ans.*—Yes; and you may be sure that it is the same with regard to any contempt of the divine prescriptions concerning oaths and vows.

Evil must come of that system which allows oaths, like everything else, to be employed independent of God, and upon every occasion, in affairs purely political, and which has brought our renowned statesmen to reckon their oaths by their years and their perjuries by their oaths. Public oaths taken to such a dynasty, or to such a form of government, infallibly appeal to those secret oaths which have been taken to a hidden dynasty for the destruction of all religious, civil, and domestic government. The former have been wantonly broken, but such will not be the case with the latter. Weishaupt and Mazzini have discovered the means of rendering an oath inviolable.

It is sometimes asked, why the ministers of a once flourishing state unite in frantic efforts to destroy it by irreligion, immorality, bankruptcy, and anarchy. The reason is very simple: these liberal ministers enjoy no other liberty than that of the slaves of antiquity—to *hear their master and to obey*. They need not fear the daggers of the friends of religion, morality, and order; but their father, Mazzini, can command thousands of daggers to strike those who break their oath to him. The whole country must perish unless God raises up a man to purge it of monsters thus sworn upon the dagger.

What has not been said and written during the last three

centuries against religious vows, against the absurd violence they do to nature, and against the material evils and political dangers they engender in the state? O ye contemnners of the saints; make your choice; for vows of some kind must and will be made, either to *the Lord God of Hosts*, or the Moloch of crime. Wherever men despise those who unite to pray, and to set the example of detachment, chastity, and the most perfect charity, there they unite to hatch conspiracies, to curse, pillage, corrupt, and murder. When they have laughed enough at *the cord of St. Francis*, then comes another cord, which will either drag all such scoffers to the sty of socialism, or fasten them to the treadmill. In vain do we labour; we never shall succeed in taking Christ in our snares; but it is written that he will take us in our own: *The Gentiles have stuck fast in the destruction which they prepared. Their foot hath been taken in the very snare which they hid. The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments; the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God!* \*

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### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

(The Second Commandment of the Church.)

REMEMBER THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.

*To hear Mass on all Sundays.*

*Ques.*—What are we commanded by these two Commandments?

*Ans.*—To sanctify the Sunday by abstaining from all *servile* work, by assisting at the holy sacrifice, and by works of Christian charity.

Although it is *the Lord's day*, because from the very beginning of the world God required that man should consecrate one day in the week to the remembrance of his benefits, and to his service; the Sunday is even more *man's day*, because all the dignity of our species consists in the fulfilment of our Christian duties. In fact, when once the masses devoted to agriculture and mechanics (that is to say, at least four-fifths of the population), no

\* Ps. ix. 16–18.

longer sanctify the day of rest, which was intended to elevate both soul and body, nothing more is required for their rapid degradation to the condition of the slaves of antiquity. Too long has it been forgotten that excessive labour, and the entire deprivation of moral culture, had so degraded what was termed the *secondary species* of men, that philosophers were gravely discussing whether a slave had a soul. And one of the greatest of the number, Aristotle, wrote in his books on *Politics*: *There is little difference between the services rendered to man by slaves and by brute beasts. Nature herself requires that there should be servitude, for she makes the bodies of free men in one way, and those of slaves in another—the former upright, and noble in stature, and the latter endowed with the strength that is needful for their destination.*

What, then, is done, when we are forbidden, in the name of God, to perform any *servile work* on one day out of every seven? Simply this; we are forbidden to relapse into a state of slavery, to re-establish an order of things which allowed a few thousand citizens to pass every day of their lives in idleness, at the expense of nineteen-twentieths of their fellow creatures, who were thus transformed into beasts of burden, an order of things which was abolished solely by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the sufferings and labours of his Church. A truly constitutional law is given us—a law which is to preserve our moral and physical superiority—a law of which the beasts of burden themselves remind us, when we forget it,\* for the Creator thought of them also when he ordained it: *Six days shalt thou labour*, says he, *and do all thy works. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.*†

I recommend you to muse upon this law, and to study the historical basis upon which it is founded by God himself; and you will perceive that under a simple and popular form it prescribes all things necessary and sufficient for the civilization of mankind.

\* The ox cannot work for nine days together; by the seventh day its plaintive bellowing appears to ask for those hours which the Creator has laid aside for the repose of all his creatures. . . . The peasants even say: "Our oxen know Sunday, and will not work on that day."—Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme*.

† Exodus xx. 9—11.



In fact, once induce all able-bodied persons to spend the six days of the week in useful labours of body or mind, so that when they review all that they have done, they may be able to say, like the great Creator, at the end of the sixth day : that *all those things are very good*,\* and moreover induce every individual to employ the seventh day in the remembrance of the benefits of God, and in thinking of that eternally glorious *Sabbath*, which he promises as a reward for good works—that is, works done in compliance with his law, is it not clear that nothing will be wanting to the civilization of such people? You will not behold amongst them heartless chiefs, heroes, and demi-gods, who say to the many: “Your destiny is to cultivate the earth unceasingly, to toil over stone, wood, and metals; our part is to enjoy ourselves. So long as you labour you shall have that portion of food which a beast requires; but as soon as your strength is exhausted, you may die of hunger, or be cast into the river.”

In fact, where, in that antique world, which studious youth learns to admire with all the enthusiasm of ignorance, where do you find even the outline of true civilization, except among the Jews, who, by observing the Sabbath, preserved intact all those civilizing dogmas of the unity and supreme dominion of God, the unity of the whole human family, and the brotherhood of its members?

*Ques.*—Every friend of humanity will grant that the periodical cessation from *servile work* is necessary for the proper education of the people. Opinions will vary, however, regarding the necessity of assisting at the holy sacrifice.

*Ans.*—And yet one implies the other. When once it is conceded that the Sunday's rest is a necessary condition for the moralization of mankind, if the people do not go to the Church, whither will they go? The middling classes will go to the theatre, the poor to the public-house. And will they there learn virtue, and be trained to labours useful to their families, to their parishes, and to the state? Or would you assemble them at public schools, and teach them reading, writing, arithmetic, and to sing jovial tunes? Would you read to them newspapers and novels, which would fill their minds with contempt of *religious rest*, and love of the *rest of vice*?

It is *the spirit of self sacrifice* alone that elevates, ennobles, and immortalises a nation. A spirit of self-sacrifice, first in the upper classes, who should regard all public offices, all talents and riches, simply as a means of serving God, and doing to

\* Genesis i. 31.

others as they would be done by; a spirit of self-sacrifice, secondly, in the lower classes, who should learn to esteem their position, which was the one chosen for himself by a God made man, and to improve it solely by their labour and their thriftiness; such is, in all nations (as must be evident to all who take the trouble of reflecting), the source of that moral and material greatness which no accident can overthrow.

Who, let me ask, can inspire men of all conditions with this spirit of self-sacrifice?

*Ques.*—It must, I think, be conceded that a crucified God alone could perform the prodigy. Nor can it, in fact, be denied that the spirit of self-sacrifice has never been found either in present or past ages, save in the children of the cross.

*Ans.*—Say rather the children of the *eucharistic sacrifice* established by Jesus Christ to perpetuate through endless ages the *memory and efficacy* of the bloody sacrifice of the cross.

I will not here repeat the thesis I laid down a few years ago, nearly in the following terms: *For those Christian nations which have deserted, or may in future desert the school of the Eucharistic sacrifice there is no medium; they must either re-kindle that great furnace of divine charity, or descend into the depths of the furnace of revolution, and restore human sacrifices on a gigantic scale . . . we must have either the sacred banquet, in which a God-man has deigned to become our food, or else the feasts of cannibalism.\**

Let me ask those who thought I regarded the future under too gloomy an aspect, what they now think of their criticism? Does not England itself hear within its bosom the sounds which precede great social storms? By imploring that great nation "to re-kindle the adorable furnace of Christian charity on the altars of St. Paul of London and of Westminster,"† I did but prefer the heartfelt wish of a Catholic soul before the gloomy prognostications of a justly celebrated Anglican pen—and in so doing, I followed the example of an eminent prelate of the United States.‡ Leav-

\* See "*l'Emmanuel, ou le Remède à tous nos maux*," consideration v.-ix.

† *l'Emmanuel, ou le Remède à tous nos maux*, con. viii.

‡ In a comparison between Catholicism and Protestantism, the celebrated Macaulay was not afraid to say: "The Catholic Church will be still young and vigorous, when one day, a traveller from New Zealand will sit on a broken arch of London Bridge, to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."—"No, it will not be so," was the reply of the eloquent Archbishop of New York; "but rather, the traveller from New Zealand will cross London Bridge in the midst of crowds of people attracted to St. Paul's by the ten thousand voices which will sing the Ambrosian hymn in thanksgiving for the return of so great a nation to the bosom of Catholic unity."—See *the Decline of Protestantism and its cause*, by the most Rev. Dr. Hughes, p. 4, 5.—New York.

ing the purely religious part of this subject to your reflections, I return to the important question which I asked a few pages back, and I beg you to tell me: If the different classes do not meet together on Sundays and holidays, at the foot of the altar, where can they meet and learn that they are a family of brethren, a family in which the poor and the weak ought to respect the rich and the strong, and the rich and strong in their turn cherish the poor and weak, and hold out to them a helping hand? I see no places, besides the Church and the cemetery, that gather together the bulk of mankind; but the cemetery gathers together and equalizes the dead alone. The Church is therefore the only school of brotherhood for the living.\* Everywhere else the classes are divided; and division calls up hatred and war.

I can easily believe that the catechism and homilies of our Church may not be very attractive to the lovers of literature; and that our popular hymns may tire ears accustomed to the opera; that the Latin of the Mass, and of our proses and hymns may not please the admirers of Cicero, Horace, Tibullus, or Ovid. Nevertheless, I think you must acknowledge, that the instructions of the priest, and his *Dominus vobiscum*, and *sursum corda*, etc., are somewhat more improving for the people than all that is said, sung, or done in those assemblies which end in such cries of death and anarchy as put to flight the frequenters of the theatre and the libraries, leaving none in the public streets and squares but the frequenters of the sacrifice, viz.: the soldier, who opposes the enemies of public peace by force of arms; and the priest, who, if he cannot quell the tumult, renders assistance to its victims.

*Ques.*—I understand perfectly, that the Mass would be the best remedy for ungovernable passions, but how can you induce

\* "The Church is not only," says M. de Cormenin, "the expression, as it were, of the whole community, the seat and centre of its existence, its very heart and head, and the place of meeting for all religious exercises; it is also the best means of civilization. On week days, not a single woman goes to the public house, the school, or other places of assembly; they all go to the Church. It is there that, seated side by side, they see and learn to know one another. It is there, that by reading their prayer-books, they remember how to read, since they seldom read anywhere else. There alone do they wear, for the first time, their neatly trimmed straw bonnets, bright coloured neckerchiefs, clean muslin caps, leather shoes, gold crosses, cotton stockings, silk aprons, and other holiday clothes. Thus consequently are their clothes worn out, and as then they must buy new ones, they give employment to trade, and occupation to linen drapers, dress-makers, milliners, shoe-makers, jewellers, etc". See *Entretiens du Village*, vii.

all those who are sunk in the depths of religious indifference, to make use of this remedy?

*Ans.*—Each individual ought to assist in this undertaking, by giving, in his own person, an example of fidelity to the commandments of God and of his Church. Have not some holy monks and priests been seen to induce even galley slaves to make use of this remedy? Have not thousands of convicts been changed through the virtue of the word of God? Have they not purified their souls in the tribunal of penance, and then consolidated and completed the work of their moral regeneration by approaching the holy communion?

I think I have given you abundant proof, that it is not the masses that slumber the sleep of indifference, an evil, which arises only amid the abundance and variety of luxurious pleasures. When the lower classes do not rest on the pillow of Christian faith and hope, they stand erect, with flashing eyes, and listen to their new religious teachers, who instruct them in their political and social rights, and in the right, among others, of enjoying themselves without labour. It is to the teaching of these new religious instructors, as much perhaps as to the zeal of the apostles of Catholicity, that we owe the decline of *indifference* among our burgesses and their present adherence to this truth: *We must either lead back the masses to the source of Christian civilization, or they will drag us down into the depths of barbarism.* In vain will European policy look for means, and employ artifice; never will it be able to evade the dilemma in which it is placed by Divine policy: *Either a Divine sacrifice, or human sacrifices!*

*Ques.*—You named works of charity, in the third place, among the different ways of sanctifying the Sunday: what did you mean by that?

*Ans.*—As well ordered charity begins at home, I mean first of all, works which maintain the life of our own souls. Is our religious knowledge weak, insufficient, and superficial; we must make up for that deficiency by our exact attendance at public instructions, and by private study, and we must also give it strength and depth by meditation. Are our hearts defiled by human affections, and by the poison of sin? we must purify them by the fervour of our prayers and by frequenting the sacraments. In the second place, we must employ our time in instructing and edifying our nearest neighbours; and neglect no means of preventing these holy days from becoming days of scandal and sin in our families. Finally, we must think of those among our neighbours who have no friends, or who are deserted

by them; we must visit the poor and the unhappy; we must instruct them, console them, and provide, as far as lies in our power, for their spiritual and temporal wants, remembering those words of Christ to the blessed souls whom he invites to receive the kingdom prepared for them from all eternity: *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me,\** and those words also of the Apostle of Charity: *If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar. For he who loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?†*

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## THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

(The 1st of the Second Table of the Law.)

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER; THAT THOU MAYEST BE LONG-LIVED IN THE LAND.

*Ques.*—What is comprehended in this Commandment?

*Ans.*—This commandment, when taken, not in the narrow, literal, Judaic sense, but in that more extensive signification given to it by the Christian spirit, comprehends the fundamental law of all domestic, religious, and civil society—a law which, if duly observed, would secure the peace of individuals, families, and nations, and enable a far larger proportion of our numbers to pass, after a long life, from the peaceful bosom of our earthly dwelling to that of the everlasting city above. You must be well aware, that the Catholic Catechism, in explaining this Divine Command, points out to us, not only the duty of children towards their parents, and of parents towards their children, but also our duty towards all superiors whatsoever, whether religious or civil, and the duty of superiors towards all under their charge. The reason why so many duties are comprised under one commandment must be evident to all who do not wilfully blind themselves. Before God, there never have been, and never will be those divisions and separations, which our modern secularizers have endeavoured to make between domestic, religious, and political society. These three things,—the family, the ecclesiastical, and the civil authority, in his eyes, form but one, and are the inseparable foundations upon which the society

\* Mat. xxv. 40.

† 1st. Ep. of St. John, iv. 20.

of human kind is to rest, and to which he has attached the very existence of nations. His divine arrangement is most simple. Since God did not ordain that men should be independent of each other, he has made use of the instrumentality of fathers and mothers, to call men into existence, and to initiate them into the life both of soul and body; but that parents may be adequate to fulfil this divine function, he has made them in their turn subordinate to two ministers, of whom, the first bears the book of the law which commands good, and forbids evil; and the second bears the sword which secures freedom of action to the good and intimidates and punishes the licentiousness of the wicked. In vain will you seek for a nation governed by itself, without a priesthood, without a magistracy; you might as well expect to find a nation, where men are born of themselves, without fathers and mothers.

Before God, then, there is but one power which forms and preserves society, and that power is his own, his *Paternity*, of whom, as St. Paul says, *all paternity in Heaven and earth is named*.\* To this Paternity, he has vouchsafed to associate three classes of men: 1st, our fathers and mothers, according to the flesh, who are the ministers of that infinite power by which he ordains that we, who but yesterday were not, to day should become men endowed with life; 2ndly, our fathers according to the spirit, who are entrusted with the office of guiding us in the road leading to that life of supreme and perfect happiness which has been promised us; 3rdly, our civil and political fathers, whose office is to protect us as long as we walk in the paths of virtue, and to restrain and punish us whenever we seek to follow our evil instincts instead of the rules of morality. God expects that we should honour these three classes of fathers, who are *his ministers . . . for good*:† and I beg you to remark particularly that the word *honour* is made use of.

*Ques.*—You have forestalled a question: Why do you say "*Honour thy father and thy mother*," instead of *Love*?

*Ans.*—Because none but the most unnatural hearts are ever devoid of filial love; but filial love does not always guarantee the existence of the honour and respect due to paternal authority. To love our spiritual and political fathers is likewise natural. No people hates their priesthood and government, so long as faults of rule have not plunged them into feverish and delirious convulsions. The Eastern nations themselves are attached to their system of government, although its action is so debasing

\* Ephes. iii. 15.

† Romans, xiii. 1—4.

to the subject; and they are right; for if anarchy is so disastrous among Christians who are familiar with the knowledge and love of public order, and with a proper degree of liberty, what would be its effects among people who are accustomed to fear nothing but the stick and the sabre, and to regard liberty simply as the right of doing whatever they will? The despotism which governs them is therefore good and loveable, in so far as it prevents them from destroying one another. Power becomes odious to the people only through its weaknesses and cowardly complaisance towards evil doers.

To overcome every feeling of indifference, and transform public contempt into enthusiastic admiration, it need but fall into hands capable of fulfilling its divine mission—to comfort the good, and terrify the wicked.

It was not therefore necessary to command inferiors to love their superiors, but it was highly necessary to guard against the dangers incurred by those in power through the blind love of their dependents. In fact, how many fathers and mothers have ruined their children and themselves also, both before God and man, by not fulfilling, or by fulfilling in only an imperfect manner, the sacred duty of just severity, for fear of grieving their offspring, and forfeiting their filial affection! How many pastors have been lost, together with their flocks, because they forgot that they were divinely commissioned not to gain men's love, but to convert them to God's Law, and to oppose all their guilty inclinations, *like a pillar of iron and a wall of brass!*\* How many princes and magistrates have ruined the nations under their care, through their eagerness for empty popularity!

It is in order to prevent such criminal weaknesses, that God has ordained that the power of superiors shall be *honoured*, and held inviolable, as much by those who exercise that power, as by those for whose benefit it is exercised; for power is neither the property of those in whose hands it is deposited, nor any concession on the part of their inferiors, but an office, a delegation of the power of God himself, established for the benefit of all. He wishes all superiors, fathers, mothers, masters, mistresses, priests or magistrates, to understand that their duty is not to yield to the wills of their inferiors, but to direct them to that good which he himself has assigned to all human wills, and that they are most blameable when they suffer the source of all order and of all genuine liberty to grow weak or contemptible in their hands.

Confusion, licentiousness, and consequently destruction, must

\* Jeremiah, i. 18.

enter into families, into religion, and into the state, as soon as authority slumbers, or becomes from its weakness, the plaything of the subject.

*Ques.*—No doubt it is right that power should be respected ; but that such may be the case, must the theory of *Divine Power*, and *paternal government* be re-established so completely as your words imply ? This theory, you know, is detested by the *liberal school*, as the hot-bed of despotism.

*Ans.*—Yes : and you must perceive, that the liberal school, by its doings, which are as mischievous as its theories are false, contributes infinitely more than Catholic philosophers and theologians, to recall us to the true principles concerning the origin and the mission of power. No school has thrown more light upon these two axioms of Christian good sense. *Power is necessarily either the right of fostering virtue and repressing vice, in the name of God and of those consciences that love justice, or it is the right of the strong to oppress the weak, by issuing what commands they please, and putting to death all opponents. Every government that is not the father, is the enemy of its subjects.*

Moderate liberals always begin, as I have proved elsewhere, with the following principle, which is the soul of Montesquieu's celebrated work : *the Spirit of the Law*. "Society being the work of man's free will ; the ruling power, not to be oppressive, ought to spring from the suffrages of the people, and to execute their wishes, however variable."\*

Once admit this principle, and you cannot but grant to radical liberalism its legitimate consequences, namely : universal suffrage. This right improved upon by radicalism, must end, as it has ended, by rendering any government impossible, and by paving the way for the accession of those monsters who directed our secret societies. Thus does that liberalism, which is called moderate, become everywhere the blind instrument for introducing those wretches, who behold in the exercise of power, nought but the liberty of pillaging the nation and of revelling over the ruins of morality and public prosperity.

To charge the defenders of *the divine and paternal character* of power with supporting despotism, is an irrational calumny, since they alone fix inviolable bounds to the exercise of power, by prescribing to it the rule never to order what God forbids, or forbid what he orders. This guarantee, which is the first and best of all, does not prevent the legitimate organs of a nation from providing themselves with other guarantees in those funda-

\* See *La Science Sociale*, Book I. ch. ii. iii.



mental laws which regulate the transmission of power, and the manner of its exercise in each state. The Catholic Church acknowledges and consecrates all forms of government, but she cannot permit the nation which enjoys the privilege of choosing its own rulers to pretend to be the fountain of power, nor can she permit such a nation to bring the sovereign power into contempt, or to destroy both that and itself too, by saying to its elected rulers : We make you our sovereigns on this condition, that you command nothing but what we please, and with this reservation, that we discard you whenever you follow any other rule than our good pleasure." The Church will always teach what Jesus Christ has ordered her ; that the nation which chooses its own rulers no more creates sovereignty than a man who enters into the state of matrimony and becomes a father creates paternity ; that the magistrate who is invested with supreme power, and the individual who becomes a father, both unavoidably fall under the prescriptions of that divine law, which has decided what are the general duties of political and domestic power ; that the unchangeable duty of a sovereign and of a father is, not to flatter the capricious inclinations of their inferiors, but to deter them from committing evil, and induce them to do good, according to the simple dictates of every well regulated Christian conscience ; that every man who opposes the accomplishment of this duty, *resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation*, from the Father of fathers, and the King of kings.\*

I ask you if that is deifying despotism, and annihilating the legitimate liberty of the people ?

*Ques.*—No, indeed ; it can only tend to destroy the liberty of the factious who would wish to be chartered by the rabble, with the privilege of oppressing and robbing the real people.

*Ans.*—That is clear. Therefore you may be certain that the government, which is the least under the control of the populace, will always be the most popular. In point of fact, who are *the people*, in whose name evil is so often done ? They are the body of upright and honest individuals, who from the greatest and richest nobleman down to the humblest day-labourer, faithfully fulfil their duty as citizens and as members of a family, who peacefully employ themselves in town or country, in necessary, useful, or (at least) innocent occupations, and who make an honourable use of riches honourably acquired, or who seek to acquire them by irreproachable means. Who are *the populace*,

\* Romans, xiii. 2.

*the rabble, the revolutionary people?* They are the very dregs of society—an army of scoundrels. This army is officered by the debauched outcasts of the higher classes, who finding themselves unable to escape misery and want, unless they can get into power, have their eye upon the plunder of private fortunes and public treasures under the plea of political and social reforms. It has for its soldiers that crowd of unprincipled vagabonds, who have no hope save in anarchy, and who urge their right to labour, and claim assistance only that they may enjoy themselves in idleness. The duty of every good government is to hold the sword continually raised against this army of vice and crime, to prevent its increase and organisation, and to diminish its numbers. But do you know which is the most efficacious means of increasing the real people, and diminishing the rabble? It is to promote the love of the family circle, and the honour due to paternal authority, without which no family can exist. The family is the indispensable mould in which a virtuous man is fashioned and consolidated. As a general rule we remain all our lives such as we were formed in the family, our love of which is the measure of our real worth.

Only three classes of men become more noble and more worthy of our esteem by leaving their families—the priest, the religious, and the soldier—and wherefore? Because they sacrifice the interests and pleasures to be found in a private family, in order to devote themselves to the moral and material good of the universal family.

The priesthood cannot adequately provide for the religious education of children, without the concurrence of parents, and of the masters and mistresses of youth; and that is the reason why the priesthood ought to exercise considerable influence, both over marriage, that act which constitutes a family, and over education, on which the future life of the children and of the family depends. If you once secularise marriage and education, the family will soon be destroyed.

The State has, in the civil order, no better support, or more faithful guardian of the traditions of honour and of devotedness to our country and prince than the sanctuary of domestic love. A revolutionary spirit always increases among the people in proportion as paternal authority and domestic love diminishes. A bad son will never make a good citizen. Unnatural sons always have been, and ever will be, the most active instigators of political tumults, and when they have obtained power through the influence of the rabble, they always make use of it to the greater glory of the rabble, endeavouring to destroy what they call *the*

*despotism of priests and fathers; the wretched spirit of the family and of the Church.* Now when through contempt of this *spirit of the family and of the Church*, a country becomes over-run with great and little patriots who no longer believe in anything but the right and necessity of governing their country, that country is ruined unless there is some arm strong enough to bind down the patriots, and labour with religion to rebuild the edifice of social life on its own eternal basis. *Honour thy father and thy mother.*

You may now clearly comprehend the meaning of the first commandment of the second table of the law, and perceive its connection with that of the first table. *I am the Lord thy God . . . . thou shalt not have strange gods before me.*

*Ques.*—You probably mean that respect for our earthly fathers is the foundation of all social order, in the same manner as adoration and love for our heavenly Father is the foundation of all religious order.

*Ans.*—Yes; if you once destroy faith in God, the Creator, Preserver, and Revealer, who alone is worthy of our adoration and love, you will have as many gods as the fertile imagination of man can invent, and you actually invite atheism to raise its head, and exclaim: "Away with all gods and all religion!" When once those three authorities empowered by God to produce and preserve social order, fall into contempt owing to the quarrels and the spirit of opposition excited among them, you will behold other authorities rise in numbers sufficient to destroy society, and bring back chaos.

These two commandments are therefore fundamental. All our social duties find their source and their basis in our respectful submission to the civil authority, just as this submission itself is grounded upon and directed by our religious duties, which are all comprised in the adoration and love of God, who is the source of all authority.

In other words, we shall never be anything towards our equals and inferiors but what we are towards our legitimate superiors, and towards our legitimate superiors what we are towards God. The man who has not learnt how to submit lovingly to the infinitely wise and almighty will of his heavenly Father, the Pontiff of pontiffs, and the King of kings, will never obey his representatives, whether domestic, religious, or political.

Now, that child who is disobedient to his parents through pride, is an evil brother, who will inculcate disobedience, and hate all who do not join him in working out the ruin of the family.

That man who rises up against religious authority has but one aim—to usurp it. If he does not preach a false religion, he does worse by inculcating contempt of all religion.

The factious man, who is an enemy of political power, urges his fellow-citizens to revolt against it, only to enslave them.

## THE FIFTH AND EIGHTH COMMANDMENTS.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY  
NEIGHBOUR.

*Ques.*—Why do you place these two commandments together?

*Ans.*—Before showing you the close connection between these two commandments, I must beg you to remark their connection with the fourth.

You must have already understood that the first and last reason for the fourth commandment has for its object and its motive the blessing of *life*; so that it may be thus expressed: *If you desire to enjoy the blessing of life in time and eternity, honour those whom I have made my instruments in imparting it to you, in preserving it, and in teaching you to make a good use of it.*

As then by the fourth commandment God orders us to honour those who were his ministers in bestowing upon ourselves the gift of life, so by the following commandments, especially by the fifth and eighth, he directs us to respect and love that same heavenly gift in all others. It is as though he said: “I am the living God, the Author and Master of all human life; no man can enter into life, unless I open the gates thereof to him. Woe therefore be to any one who dares (save in cases determined by laws not in opposition to mine) to deprive one of his brethren of this gift of my love!”

Now, *man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, says Jesus Christ. There are therefore two lives in us; our physical life, which consists in the union of the body and the soul, a union which is kept up partly by those mysterious links which God alone knows and sustains, and partly by causes which we ourselves know, and for which we are to provide by food, respiration, etc.; secondly, our spiritual life, which consists in the union of the soul with God, a union produced in regenerated man by the supernatural

virtues of faith, hope and charity, and preserved and strengthened by the means of sanctification ordained by our Saviour. Need I prove that this is the Christian idea of human life?

*Ques.*—No; for this idea is but the summary of your explanations both of the first commandment and of the Apostles' Creed.

*Ans.*—Since man possesses two kinds of life, it follows that murder may be committed in two different ways, physically and spiritually. We may be murderers without refusing a man the food and care necessary for his bodily life, mingling poison with what he eats, or violently separating soul and body. We are murderers, when through criminal carelessness or deliberate intention we deprive a fellow creature of the means of obtaining that religious education which is indispensable for the life of his soul; when we voluntarily mingle the poison of error with his spiritual food; when by seduction or by violence we seek to deprive him of the gift of faith, which is the germ of a Christian life; of the gift of hope, which is the indispensable source of all earnestness in doing good; or of the gift of charity, of which it is written: *He that loves not abideth in death.\**

It further follows that spiritual murder, the murder of the soul of a neighbour is a far more heinous crime both in its nature and its consequences than corporal murder, on account of the immense superiority of the soul over the organised matter to which it is united. The destruction, whether slow or violent, of a living human body, by poison or by the hand of an assassin, is no doubt an action hateful in the eyes of God and man; but after all, is not the real harm done to the victim and his friends less than if, instead of destroying the body, the murderer had ruined the soul by administering to him the poison of error and vice? In the first case, the murderer does but hasten the last hour of his victim by a few days. If prepared to appear before God, has not actually the victim cause to rejoice? And even if in a state of sin, may he not possibly have been brought to repentance by the sting of death? May he not, when falling under the blow of the dagger, have uttered that heartfelt cry which God never rejects: "*Forgive me as I forgive my enemies?*" And even taking the very worst view of the case, that soul is at least secure from the most dreadful of evils, offending God. No doubt, the main point is not to lose our souls; but there are also greater and lesser degrees of guilt and of misery even in hell itself.

\* 1st Epistle of St. John, iii. 14.

In the case of spiritual murder, on the contrary, a man not only has a victim, but he also creates another murderer, for it is seldom that one perverted soul does not pervert others, who in their turn will assist in spreading the mischief, and thus laying up a fearful harvest of vice and crime for the original disseminators. Finally, by giving death to the soul, do you not prepare the most dreadful of deaths for the body united to it, that death which will never end? Thus spiritual murder implies also bodily murder, and constitutes the sin of *scandal*, a crime which our Lord Jesus Christ never mentions without loading it with anathemas.

*Ques.*—And what do you mean by scandal?

*Ans.*—*Any word or action which tends to the spiritual ruin of our neighbour.* Next, I will prove that the very worst kind of scandal is that which is given by *word*, and that every scandalous action implies a falsehood. But I think you must already have perceived the close connection between the fifth and eighth commandments.

*Ques.*—This connection may exist, certainly, but it appears to me extremely metaphysical. Are you not afraid of diminishing the horror felt for scandal by identifying it with falsehood, which is a sin committed daily and hourly with so little compunction?

*Ans.*—The very cause of the ruin of mankind and of these words of our Saviour: *Woe to the world, because of its scandals!* is the extreme facility with which falsehoods are daily and hourly uttered; and I will show you that if falsehood was banished from the world, scandal would soon cease.

The life of the soul consists in its union with God, and this union, we are told by the Creator and Saviour of souls, is maintained by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of sovereign truth. If you continue in my word, he says to us again, you shall be my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.\* In fact, we remain in the path that leads to eternal life, only so long as we strive to do the truth in charity,† viewing things in their true light, and esteeming them only according to their value in the sight of God.

Falsehood, from the very fact of its being in opposition to truth, is therefore the poison of the soul. No doubt there are many falsehoods, very properly termed *slight*, because they neither deny nor falsify any of the truths essential to the spiritual life; but what is not slight, is that natural tendency of all falsehood to vitiate the eye of the mind, and cause it to take

\* John, viii. 31, 32.

† Ephesians, iv. 15.

truth for falsehood, and falsehood for truth. Moreover, infinite wisdom has told us that *the mouth that lieth killeth the soul*.\*

If these principles appear to you metaphysical, you need not be surprised; as our souls are metaphysical, such must also be the laws of their existence. Facts will elucidate all this.

Whence proceed all scandals, spiritual and temporal disasters, and all the evils which have ever harassed, and still harass mankind? From the father of lies, and from those who have laboured, and are labouring to perpetuate his work. He who came to destroy the works of falsehood, said to his enemies: *You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in truth, because the truth is not in him.*† *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

Analyse every species of wickedness, and all crimes, private, public, or national, and you will invariably find in them a falsehood. What is it that causes a man to become a thief, a murderer, an adulterer? A falsehood, which has changed and corrupted, if not destroyed in his soul, the power of discriminating between good and evil. *From the heart*, says Jesus Christ, *come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.*‡ Now, by what is the fire of criminal passions enkindled and maintained in the heart? Invariably by a falsehood, either explicit or implicit, which deceives the soul, and causes it to see good in evil, and evil in good. I have already told you that scandal may be given either by words or actions, but that the worst kind of scandal is that given by words, which besides can scarcely be separated from scandal given by actions. Let us explain this last proposition. Whoever commits evil before a child, tells it, by the very act, that the evil is good, for a child is naturally inclined to think right all that he sees done by his elders; and no doubt that is the reason why Jesus Christ in speaking of scandalising little ones, makes use nearly of the same words as when he speaks of the crime of Judas. Of the first, he says: *It must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. . . . He that shall scandalise one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.*

\* Wisdom, i. 11.

† These words point out the cause of the fall of the rebel Archangel, and their meaning appears to me to be: *He did not persevere in the love of truth, because he was not truth.*—(Pride.)

‡ Matthew, xv. 19.

Of the other, he says : *The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed! It were better for him, if that man had not been born.\**

Any man giving bad example to a grown-up person who has a distinct knowledge of good and evil, is, beyond doubt, most guilty, for he induces that person to commit sin, in the first place, by an appeal to his senses ; and in the second, by saying, tacitly : *The evil is not so great as you think.* But the scandal is infinitely more fatal when the conscience of this adult is corrupted by poisonous words, and brought to approve what is wrong. In the first case, if the person scandalised commits a crime, he at least retains that light which showing him his wretched condition may induce him to rise out of it, and prepares him for repentance by causing remorse. He has lost charity, an unspeakable loss, but he still retains the two first essentials of a spiritual life, faith and hope. But when, on the contrary, the infernal blast of error has put out both those lights, the soul continues calm in the midst of sin ; this calmness in sin is soon followed by delight in sin, and he who delights in evil soon becomes ravenous for evil. Now when a soul has once fallen into this depth, it can be raised by nothing less than a miracle of divine mercy.

Do you now see more clearly how close a connection there is between lying and spiritual murder ?

*Ques.*—Yes ; and I think that if lying could be totally abolished we should hear no more of corporal murder.

*Ans.*—Nothing can be more true. What in fact are those great social disturbances, called Revolutions, in which murders are committed wholesale ? They are never anything but *lies*, which the people attempt to realise, so deeply rooted are they in their minds. To go no farther back, what was the first and principal cause of those horrible religious and civil wars which rendered the interval between the years 1525 and 1648 a period of bloodshed and devastation ? Without the slightest doubt it was that lie published by Luther and his followers : *The Catholic Church is the work of Anti-christ ; all persons, both*

\* Matthew, xviii. 6, 7 ; xxvi. 24.—Whoever wishes to know the reason why spiritual infanticide is thus likened to deicide, may find it in these words of our Saviour : *He that shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.* (xviii. 5).—Jesus Christ lives and reigns in the innocent soul of a child ; the person therefore who introduces therein the love of evil, which is the most terrible of all deaths, *crucifies the Son of God anew* (Hebrews, vi. 6), and deserves to share the fate of Judas.



*princes and people, should take the Bible and hasten to reconstruct the religion of Jesus Christ on the ruins of that abominable Popery.*

Have our earlier political revolutions, the offspring of our religious revolutions, been anything but a violent and bloody attempt to realise the ridiculous romance of the *Social Contract*, itself the offspring of the romance of *The Spirit of Laws*? In short, what is the aim of those fierce legions of demagogues? What but to realise the infernal romances of Weishampt, Mazzini, Proudhon, etc.?

What conclusion is to be drawn from the extensive experience, which Europe has had of the *liberty* of falsehood?

*Ques.*—I should say the following conclusion might be drawn: That there has been ample experience, and that, after all, the liberty for men to live as good Christians, is far preferable to the liberty of a few proud, romantic minds, who, whether deliberately or indeliberately, urge on the multitude to bloodshed by teaching them to fix their passionate affections upon chimeras.

*Ans.*—Yes, it is time for those who are in the possession of power to understand how intimate a connection exists between the fifth and eighth commandments, and to be firmly convinced that liberty in lying and giving scandal is always accompanied by liberty in committing murder.

Before proceeding to the other commandments of the second table, it is proper that I should here remind you of that general precept which is the soul of all others, and *the fulfilment of the law*, according to St. Paul: *For, he says, thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.\**

In fact, if respect for authority is the foundation of all social order, as we have seen in the fourth commandment, it is evident that this respect will either be deceitful, or basely servile, so long as it is not religious, filial, animated by love, and grounded upon the consideration that all persons entrusted with authority are ministers of the divine goodness in our regard.

With regard to the fifth and eighth commandments, it is also perfectly clear that we never shall obey the letter of these laws, unless we enter into their full meaning, which has been unfolded to us by the spirit of Christianity: *He who hateth his brother is a murderer*—a murderer, in the first place, of himself, because

\* Romans, xiii. 9, 10.

*he that loves not abideth in death* ; and a murderer, in the second place, of his brother, for hatred gives rise to hatred, and when hatred has murdered souls, it next proceeds to murder bodies. Therefore, if we would really avoid doing evil to our neighbour and to ourselves, we must seek to do good both to him and to ourselves, taking as a rule this law, which Jesus Christ delivered under three different forms : *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. All things whatsoever you would (reasonably) that men should do to you, do you also to them. A new commandment I give unto you ; that you love one another as I have loved you.*

If you meditate on these three short sentences, you will find in them the indispensable conditions of eternal life for individuals, and of temporal existence for Christian nations. You will see that the people who understand and obey these commands might commit to the flames all their laws, and that all the laws of the people, who have forgotten these commands, will serve no other purpose than to conduct them to the flames.

## THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE.

*Ques.*—What connection is there between these two Commandments and the preceding ones ?

*Ans.*—The following : by the three first commandments, we are commanded to adore, love, respect, and imitate, above all, God, who is the original source and sovereign dispenser of life ; by the fourth, to honour and love the instruments made use of by God to impart and preserve in us the blessing of life ; by the fifth and eighth, to respect and love the blessing of life in the persons of all those to whom it has been imparted ; while by the sixth and ninth, we are forbidden to dishonour the divine gift of life, by defiling and breaking its laws in our own persons.

The infinitely pure and holy Father who created us to his own image and likeness, and regenerated us by the blood of the Word made flesh, and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost the sanctifier, in order one day to admit us *to be inebriated with the plenty of his house*,\* does not will that we should eternally lose

\* Psalm, xxxv. 9.

these souls and bodies *bought with a great price,\** by yielding to the ignoble passions which are common to us with the beast. By forbidding us to indulge in impure affections, or in aught that can excite them, he desires to spare himself and us that frightful spectacle of our degradation in time and eternity, which he has described in the following terms: *Man, whom I had crowned with glory and honour, and set over the works of my hands, did not understand, he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them. This way of theirs is a stumbling-block to them, and afterwards they shall delight in their mouth. They are laid in hell like sheep; death shall feed upon them.* †

Do you think that God displays too great severity in requiring that we should retain the high rank he has allotted us in the creation, and not sink lower than brute beasts, by wishing to live as they live?

*Ques.*—In a Christian point of view, no doubt this command is extremely just; but alas! if *the spirit indeed is willing the flesh is weak*, and the obligation of living like a pure spirit naturally prompts the question: *Who then shall be saved?* ‡

*Ans.*—Since you quote the question of the disciples, you must also be acquainted with the answer of the Master: *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* § Now, God, who is too just and good to command impossibilities, has placed our bodies under the command of our souls, and the latter will never be overcome, except by their own choice.

*The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it*, said the Almighty to Cain, who was on fire with a passion as furious as that of lust. Believe me, the human soul which can take in the entire universe at a glance, and penetrate even beyond the visible heavens in the twinkling of an eye; the soul which is powerful enough to command the body, to level a mountain, or to divide it in twain; the soul which daily says to the body: "Go, and stand at the cannon's mouth, or in face of bayonets, and beware of exhibiting the least symptom of fear;" this soul, most assuredly, has a hundred times more strength than is necessary for saying to the most excitable body: "I forbid thee these brutalities, and if thy blood still rebels, I have more than one means of diminishing its quantity and its heat."

But in order for the soul to display such strength, it is necessary that it should be alive; and its life consists in the

\* 1 Corinthians, vi. 20.

† Psalms, viii. 6, 7; xlviii. 13—15.

‡ Matthew, xix. 25.

§ Ibid, 26.

thought of its true life, that is to say, in habitual meditation upon its sublime destiny. Let it contemplate all things in the light of the Gospel, which alone can illumine the mystery of our beginning and of our last end; let it be firmly convinced that it has entered into this perishable world, not to enjoy itself, but to fight, and thus in some degree merit that eternal bliss which is prepared for it in a better world. Let it encourage itself to make the necessary efforts for that end, by meditation both on the eternal kingdom promised to those chaste souls, that have *reduced their bodies to subjection*, and on the eternal disgrace and torments, into which souls base enough to make themselves the slaves of their bodies will be plunged. If a soul feeds upon those salutary thoughts, and has recourse to those remedies which Jesus Christ has established for assisting the spirit to triumph over the flesh, the *impossibility* of continence will quickly vanish, and will appear in its true light—the dream of sensualists.

If you think these last words too severe, I could show you them almost word for word in the writings of one of the greatest authorities among the dissolute.

*Ques.*—In fact, I think I remember having read much the same in the writings of the Citizen Jean Jacques.

*Ans.*—Yes, and even in those of more shameless authors than the writer of *Héloïse*, and of the *Confessions*. But I am anxious to be brief on this head, and the following are the only subjects for philosophical reflection which I will offer you concerning the sixth and ninth commandments.

Not only is lust a vice and an evil, but the Creator of man's conscience has ordained that it should everywhere be regarded as shameful, and that even the most corrupted nations should designate it simply as *vice*, whilst purity should be known by the exquisite name of *virtue*.\* So long as the victims of lust respect this decree of the consciences of all mankind, and are ashamed of their own weakness, every Christian heart ought to be filled with the deepest pity for them. Some are prodigal sons, whom charity ought to strive to restore to the embraces of the tenderest of Fathers. Others are public sinners, it may be unfaithful wives, whom we must seek after, like the Good Shepherd, saying to them: "Take courage! henceforth love and serve that God, who will reward with eternal love the sacrifice you make of vice, whereas men have rewarded the sacrifice you made of your virtue with nothing but contempt."

\* See *Science de la Vie*, tom. II., leçon. xliii.

It is the manner in which vice is publicly honoured, and virtue deliberately despised and obstinately trampled under foot, that calls for the abhorrence of God and of all the true friends of humanity. Corrupted as Paganism was, even to excess, it never went so far as that; it adored everything, vice and virtue, and sought, by decreeing extraordinary honours to conjugal chastity, and especially to virginity, to balance the depraved manners and the infamous worship which it inculcated. Now, the children of light have done, and still do, what the children of darkness neither did nor allowed.

I ask every man who is in the slightest degree versed in the history of modern literature, what thesis from that of Luther on the *necessities of marriage*, down to those of the pamphleteers and ballad-singers of the present day, has employed so many pens all over Europe, and called forth such applause as the following: *No man can resist the concupiscence of the flesh, whoever attempts to do so is a presumptuous fool; regard all who are thought to have succeeded, as hypocrites.*

Do you not think the fact clear enough to dispense me from bringing forward any proofs?

*Ques.*—Yes; with regard to the age of Voltaire, which unfortunately is still continuing.

*Ans.*—That is sufficient for my purpose, and I will not stop to prove that the age of Voltaire only debased and identified with Paganism those shameful sins which preceding ages had sought to elevate, and (horrible to say) to identify with Christianity.\*

This is what I call the shame and the greatest evil of Europe; and the following is the remedy which the Author and Preserver of the life of the body, of the mind, and of society, has placed in opposition to contempt of those laws which are the safeguards of this threefold life. This remedy consists in the three anathemas which are imprinted upon our physical, our intellectual, and our social system.

*Ques.*—What are those anathemas?

*Ans.*—The anathema attached to our physical constitution does not need long commentaries (which however you may find in medical books). It is enough to say to those who refuse to believe that this vice corrupts the soul: "Look at the bodies of its slaves." "Have tyrants," asked Bourdaloue, in a sermon preached at Court, "ever invented more unendurable torments than pleasure entails upon all who indulge in it without

\* The *Science of Life*, lesson xliv.

restraint? They have introduced into the world diseases which were formerly unknown to mankind; and doctors agree in teaching that those fatally complicated maladies which baffle their skill, confound their experience, and give the lie to all their former aphorisms, have taken their rise in *pleasures*.\*"

This physical anathema may be thus expressed: *The human body which governs the soul, instead of being governed by it, will sink beneath the brute; for the body of the brute does not rot during its life.*

The intellectual anathema is expressed in these prophetic words of the patriarch Jacob to an unchaste son: *Thou art poured out as water, grow thou not.*† Whoever has not learnt from religion, or from philosophy enlightened by faith, to respect that holy and mysterious law, by which God perpetuates the divine phenomena of life, will never become noble either in thought or deed. But those sacrilegiously weak minds which openly make game of this law, are condemned to wander to and fro in darkness, to waste themselves away in restless impotence, and to raise nought but ruins. Let us adduce two general facts as examples.

Fact the first. Whence does it proceed that the descendants of those powerful families of the middle ages, some of whom founded monarchies which resisted every storm, and increased in strength as ages passed on, while others founded republics of small extent, but of great military and commercial renown, which subsisted many ages; whence does it proceed that the descendants of these families have only succeeded in destroying what their ancestors had built up?

Whence does it proceed that modern policy, whether revolutionary, or self-styled anti-revolutionary, has done nothing but entangle itself in its own works, bury itself under the ruins of its most boasted structures, and verify, by its everlasting changes, these words of the Prophet: *They were troubled and reeled like a drunken man, and all their wisdom was swallowed up. . . . Contempt was poured forth upon their princes, and he caused them to wander out of their way. . . . They have not known nor understood; they walk on in darkness. All the foundations of the earth shall be moved.*‡

Alas! who does not know? The higher classes are *poured out like water*, and that is the reason why everything gives way beneath their feet, and crumbles in their hands. Water mingled

\* *Sermon contre l'amour des Plaisirs*, 1st point.

† Genesis, xlix. 4.

‡ Psalms, cvi. 27—40; lxxxi. 5.

with dust produces mud, and all that is built on mud falls back into the mud. It is the Spirit of God that creates and gives increase to nations, and the Spirit of God *does not remain in man when he gives way to the inclinations* \* of the flesh.

Fact the second. Why do our innumerable schools of poetry and painting no longer produce those masterpieces of art, which immortalise the country and the age which give them birth? Why are all the heroic poems, which we can (with the slightest reason) compare with the epics of antiquity, of a date anterior to the glare of the modern lights of reason? Why is it impossible for a Christian with a mind capable of appreciating the beautiful, to pass through our picture galleries without having to lament the fact that they are filled with Christs, Madonnas, and Saints, to which conscience is forced to exclaim: "I know you not; from the earth you spring, to the earth you must return?"

The answer must still be the same. That immortal, divine beauty which enraptures the hearts and souls of mankind from generation to generation, must ever remain unknown to talents brutalised by the worship of that earthly beauty, which one fit of illness can destroy. Until religion once more creates painters and poets, we must be satisfied with clever sketchers and colorists, such as mere art can produce, to paint battles, family groups, or drunken quarrels; and we must be satisfied with witty versifiers who succeed admirably in the civic drama, which Alfieri called *the epics of frogs*.† They are *poured out as water*; they will *not grow*. However, as fire makes water boil, and gives it sufficient strength to raise a balloon even up into the clouds, in like manner the fire of the mind produces bubbles which rise for a moment before the applause of the crowd, and then sink down again like the balloon and the vapour.

However perfect the exterior form may be, it must undergo the fate of all human bodies, even the most beautiful, when the soul is wanting. So long as poetry does not adore the living God, it must realise that laughable definition of Rivarol: "*Spoiled prose in which verse has been inserted.*" Let us quote a writer far superior to Rivarol and the half-paganised Alfieri, to those men of talent who wish to live in fame, let us say to them with St. Paul: *If you live according to the flesh you shall die; but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live, both yourselves and your works.* ‡

\* Genesis, vi. 3.

† *Memoirs of Alfieri* (the Tragedian); written by himself.

‡ Romans, viii. 13.

The social anathema is expressed in these words of the Lord to David, when the latter became an adulterer and murderer : *For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing in the sight of all Israel, and in the sight of the sun.\**

When in those countries which have been more favoured by heaven than David, since they have had for their teacher, not the patriarchs and prophets, but the Son of God himself, the law of all social laws is derided by the wits ; when the higher classes have sufficiently applauded and flattered those who taught them to laugh at the expense of outraged husbands and fathers ; when the cry that *Voltaire is the voice of modern Europe, and Goëthe of modern Germany*, has been repeated often enough ; when the disciples of these two Anti-christian geniuses grow tired of outraging our Divine Lord, his Blessed Mother, his Saints, and his Church, and of comparing the sisters of St. Vincent of Paul to common prostitutes ; when, I say, such conduct has become general over Europe, instead of being confined to individuals, or to a few nations, this is what must necessarily be the consequence. From the lowest dregs of society will arise in thousands monsters of wickedness, who will swear to do openly, by the light of burning cities, and to the sound of the death rattle of the dying, and the triumphant scoffs of hell, that which their betters lately did with all the grace of wit, and talent of dainty and learned debauchery.

You must understand my meaning, and you know whether I have invented anything.

*Ques.*—Certainly, you have invented nothing. We have seen and heard quite sufficient to believe what God has mercifully preserved us from seeing.

*Ans.*—Yes ; Almighty God, who knows far better than we do what the Christian world has cost him, mercifully exhibits the scourge before letting it fall, and stretches forth his hand as soon as we display the least sign of repentance. He has stretched forth his hand to us even now, but it is only a respite. If the higher classes do not profit by this mercy to repair terrible evils, the hand will be withdrawn, the evil plants produce fruit, and the world behold what it has never yet beheld, how Christian nations perish !

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\* 2nd Book of Kings, xii. 12.



## THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S GOODS.

*Ques.*—What connection is there between these two last Commandments and the preceding two?

*Ans.*—When I began the explanation of the preceding two Commandments, I showed you that the first six and the eighth articles of the decalogue aim at the preservation and development of the divine blessing of life in man. By the seventh and tenth articles, the Supreme Law-giver orders us to respect those gifts which he has destined for the preservation of our physical and moral existence; thus establishing the right of property, without which there can be neither social education nor security for soul or body, and completing that short but perfect legislation, of which our Saviour said: *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.*

*Ques.*—Is then the right of property so necessary for the preservation of society?

*Ans.*—Yes, no real society can exist without it. Abolish that right, cause the earth and all that it produces to belong to every man equally, labour will instantly cease, and famine will drive men to devour each other. "Communism," I said elsewhere, to those who were wasting their time in such idle dreams—"has existed for many ages among numbers of the Oceanic Islanders, and with what result? The people are everywhere incorrigibly idle, excessively immoral, and constantly in danger of dying of hunger in a land where the earth might yield a harvest every month. And as the lazy are never much inclined to die of hunger, these people are cannibals. What would then be the case in our country, where nothing less than incessant labour is required to make the earth yield a harvest once a year?"\*

Almighty God, who did not create man to sink into idleness and barbarism, from the first placed him on the earth to *dress it, and to keep it*.† These two words, to *dress* it and *keep* it, describe all the conditions of society. What, in fact, are all the members of a state? *Dressers* and *keepers*, or rather workmen employed in different offices. The former till the earth, and cause it to bring forth vegetables, or yield minerals and metals—

\* *La Science de la Vie*, t. II., leçon xxxv.

† Gen. ii. 15.

fashion these original substances into shapes fit for common use—transport them from country to country, and trade with them. (Mechanism, agriculture, manufacturers, and commerce.) The latter, mixed up everywhere with the workmen, explain to them the origin and sublime end of labour; instruct them in the virtues which dignify and render it fruitful, and combat those vices which destroy and waste its profits.—(Religious ministry). Others, in their laboratories and studios, endeavour to enlighten labour, or else, by productions of a higher order, strive to amuse, adorn, and relieve minds that are exhausted by toil.—(Sciences and fine arts.) Finally, the magistrate watches over the safety of all; settles disputes, and intimidates the disturbers of the public peace.

This manner of classing mankind is somewhat better than that of the socialist economists and novelists, who divide mankind into two classes:—useful labourers, and idle consumers; counting among the latter whoever does not perform manual work, or handle an obscene paint-brush, or an atheistical pen. Idle consumers are to be met with in every class, but the worst of all are those who labour to destroy society, by endeavouring to persuade the arms and legs of the social body that the head and stomach are undoing them all by their idleness. A good government can, however, make such subjects of some use by employing them in public works under the suitable superintendence of a keeper of convicts.

It is by means of proper harmony between the different members of society, that a state is enabled duly to provide for its material necessities, and to labour at its moral education. It is by this love of order and of labour—and by the practice of patience and charity, that man can enter into the plans of his Heavenly Father, and prepare for that blessed state, in which God himself will be the reward of all his trials and sacrifices. But since the right of property is one of the most essential foundation stones of social life, as we have just shown, it necessarily follows that God, and God alone, could establish that right.

*Ques.*—But should not the exercise of that right be regulated by the civil law?

*Ans.*—Yes, our right to possess or not to possess an article of furniture, is subject to the regulations of the civil power, in the same manner as our right to be a member either of the domestic or religious family is subject to the regulations of paternal or religious authority. But in the same manner that the father and the priest cannot expel us from the religious or domestic family capriciously and without an important reason, so the power

of the state cannot dispose of our property at will, or without good grounds; such as our own misconduct, or the public good; and in the latter case it does not deprive us of our property, but only obliges us to sell or exchange it.

Government being the preserver (and not the founder) of society, ought to seek to preserve the right of property by regulating it with the utmost reserve and prudence, and by preventing any serious abuses; because, respect for the most sacred rights is soon destroyed, if those rights are grossly abused. But a government must not look upon itself as the author of the right of property, or favour Montesquieu's egregious error which has been copied from his books many thousand times: *Property is a gift of the civil law*.<sup>\*</sup> This was a logical error in the author of *l'Esprit des lois*, whose fundamental maxim was, that *society was created by human legislation*. It is vain to seek to limit or restrict the sense of this maxim, by saying that "it is the interest of the public for each individual to retain possession of that property which has been assigned him by law, etc." The conclusion must always be the same: The law can take away whatever it has given—abolish to-day what it set on foot yesterday, and order a new division of property, or even communism.

Doubtless, people will not proceed straightway to the radical application of the maxim; but the lawyers and the cabalers will soon discover that some properties are too large, useless, nay, hurtful, such as those of the clergy and nobility. The parliament will lay down that these grants, so hurtful to the nation, were made during times of ignorance, and that the nation can recover by law what by law was taken from it.

When this property has been confiscated, the demagogues will appear on the scene, and say to the new proprietors and capitalists, "You did well to strip those *useless consumers* of their property, but you must not take their places, or spend in luxury and effeminacy what belongs to the *workers*; give us, therefore, our share, or communism! or else you will soon be hunted down with the cries "*Property is theft!* Down with the capitalists!"

Montesquieu, (who wrote in 1748) doubtless did not perceive all the consequences of his maxim; for, to have a clear and correct insight into futurity, it is necessary to be in the right, and to make use of the telescope of reflection. But we who live in 1861, should indeed be strangely wanting in reflection, in penetration, and in good sense, if we did not consider the following maxim to be unquestionable.

<sup>\*</sup> *De l'Esprit des Lois*, B. XXVI. ch. xv.

The right of property must be sacred for all, or for none. If one single class of mankind makes light of the four commandments of God, which are the safeguards of property and morality, a social anathema is unavoidable: you will be able to restrain neither the violators of property nor the violators of the person.

As I do not wish to repeat what I have said elsewhere concerning the impossibility of rendering the right of property sacred by civil laws alone,\* I will now proceed to the commandments of the best protectress of morality and property.

## THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH,

### ON THE LEGISLATIVE POWER OF THE CHURCH AND ITS CONNECTION WITH THE STATE.

*Ques.*—In the first place I must ask, whether the Church has any right to impose obligatory laws independently of the civil power, and whether her proper mission is not restricted to preaching the law of Jesus Christ?

*Ans.*—It is precisely on this mission of preaching the law of Jesus Christ, and causing it to be observed among all nations, that the foundation of the most unlimited and independant legislative power conceivable essentially rests. The Church has the right of decreeing whatever she considers necessary or useful for that end, and of inflicting due punishment upon all transgressors. Although there are some subjects, pertaining both to Church and State, which might be better regulated if the two powers came to an understanding, and made mutual concessions, it does not at all follow, that the legislative power of the Church is a concession from the State, or ought to be subordinate to it. If the Church had been obliged, before she could govern herself, to wait for the concurrence and approbation of the State, Christianity would not yet have come into existence.

It was by opposing, during the space of nearly three centuries, all the edicts of the greatest empire the sun ever shone upon, that the Church succeeded in converting the universe, and even the rulers of that great empire itself. Now she did not triumph over the Cæsars, in order to be kept in leading strings by the five or six hundred Rulers of Christian States, who have succeeded to

\* See *Science de la Vie*, t. II. leçon xlv.

the inheritance of the Cæsars. If a right of direct interference in the government of the Church were recognised in the more powerful States, the same right would necessarily have to be extended to all rulers, even to the Prince of Monaco, or the President of the Republic of San Marino; and is it not plain, that all ecclesiastical authority would thus be speedily destroyed?

What weight can all the arguments of the flatterers of civil power have, in comparison with the act of investiture which was delivered to the heads of the Church by that Divine Lord, from whom all power proceeds?

*As my Father hath sent me, I also send you . . . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost . . . . . All power is given to me in Heaven and on earth: Go therefore, . . . . . Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. . . . . Amen, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven. . . . . And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, (a rock) and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven, etc.*

If this patent does not confer upon those who received it the right of making laws binding upon all consciences, whether imperial, royal, aristocratic or democratic,—upon all consciences that adore in Jesus Christ, God made man, then the right of making laws does not exist at all, and the wisest lawgivers have been guilty of usurpation. What is wanting to make this patent worthy of universal respect? Is it not sealed with the blood shed on Calvary, and the blood of thousands and thousands of martyrs? Has it not been sanctioned by the faith of fifty Christian generations? Is it not inscribed on the tomb-stones of those who sought to destroy it? Do you say that it has been invented, or at least altered by popes, bishops, and priests? But did I not prove, when speaking of Catholic unity, that this pretended invention or alteration is an absolute impossibility, and that those who appear to believe in it really do not, or else are capable of believing anything excepting the truth?\*

*Ques.*—I agree, that the Church may have a right to make on religious subjects, laws binding in conscience; but for these laws to have their full and entire effect in the state, they require the secular *exequatur*: now is a magistrate obliged to give that

\* See Book I., Fact 3rd.

*exequatur* to laws, which have been made independant of his authority?

*Ans.*—I might spare myself the trouble of answering this last question. Your acknowledgment that the Church has the power to make laws binding upon the consciences of all her children, is sufficient; for in that consists the very essence of legislative power. That law which is not binding upon the conscience, cannot properly be called a law; it is simply a penal statute which, inflicting penalties upon transgressors, but imposing no moral obligation, bears not the characteristic of law.

With regard to the secular *exequatur*, it has, among other advantages, that of facilitating the promulgation of the ecclesiastical laws, and causing due respect to be outwardly rendered them. But I can assure you, that it is far more necessary to the State than to the Church. The Church increased without the *exequatur* of the rulers of the world, and in defiance of their laws; she still retains her empire over two hundred million consciences, nearly half of which are under the rule of anti-Catholic, or pagan governments. If she numbers fewer children under the sway of her enemies than in Catholic countries, she at least numbers more heroes; for a Catholic under an adverse government is a confessor of the faith perpetually exposed to the chances of martyrdom, and such a man may be worth a hundred common-place Catholics slumbering quietly under the shadow of a steeple protected by the national flag. In Catholic states, if the civil magistrate is not obliged to give the *exequatur*, except inasmuch as he has taken part in the making of the ecclesiastical laws, the slight inconvenience I have already pointed out is unavoidable; the Church will have to wait for the agreement of some hundreds of governments, that is to say, for ever, before she can promulgate laws that are essential to the spiritual welfare of the Christian world.

Is not the state well repaid for any obligation it is under of enforcing respect to religion, by that obligation which the Church imposes upon all her ministers of causing the government to be invariably respected, not merely exteriorly, but in the most secret recesses of the consciences of their flocks, where the civil law can exercise no jurisdiction.

Did the Church wait for *Concordats* to be signed before saying to the people: "Be subject to all the authorities that exercise jurisdiction over you, not only through fear, but for the love of that God who has bestowed power upon them; honour your kings and princes, and all who are the depositaries of their power; pay the taxes scrupulously; and observe every law religiously,

except in some rare case, when I shall say to you : Such a law is contrary to the laws of your Heavenly Father, therefore you cannot obey it ; but obey in every other particular ; for such is the will of God, and such is your own interest, since any government, even an unjust one, is better than anarchy !” The Church does not deem it necessary that she should have taken part in the formation of the civil laws, before she will preach obedience to their behests ; why, therefore, should not the State act in like manner towards her ?

*Ques.*—Yes ; that would be just ; but people say that religion, when she makes herself mistress of souls, takes the lion’s share, and degrades the power of the State, by limiting its jurisdiction to material interests.

*Ans.*—Who says that ? It must be some one who has not the slightest idea of what the two powers are, and what they accomplish, when acting in unison.

Religion seeks to become mistress of souls ; yes, not only of the souls of those who are governed, but likewise of the souls of those who govern—and woe to sovereigns and subjects, and to religion herself, if she fail to do so ! For she can save souls, only inasmuch as they submit to the authority she possesses to instruct and guide them to eternal life. But does the Church obtain influence over souls in order to bend them to her will, and exercise despotic sway over them ? No, it is in order to cause them to obey, as she herself obeys, the infinitely wise and noble law of the Creator and Redeemer of both soul and body—an unchangeable law,—a law known to all, and as binding, nay more binding upon the priest than upon his spiritual subject.

The priest penetrates even into the conscience, that sanctuary of the soul ? Yes ; but once in it, he admits those who would never have entered there but for him—I mean the rulers of the State, and all the depositaries of their power. He builds them a throne more solid than one made of ebony or of brass ; for so long as that throne remains standing in the conscience, in vain may it be overthrown exteriorly ; it will certainly rise again ; but if once overthrown in the soul, no human strength can preserve it from total ruin. Together with the Commandments of God and the Church, the priest introduces into the soul the civil law, as an emanation from a power established by God himself ; and when respect for the laws, and for those who watch over their observance, does not exist in the conscience, how can it exist exteriorly ?

But you say that the power of the law is degraded by being reduced to exercise authority in temporal matters alone ? Such

ideas are most irrational, and merely prove great ignorance of the nature of ecclesiastical and civil government. Out of a hundred thousand decisions which priests, bishops, and popes give daily in the tribunal of conscience, ninety-nine thousand at least concern material subjects ; because, for one single person who errs in questions upon purely spiritual matters, ninety-nine are liable to err both before God and man, through the abuse of their physical faculties and material possessions, as also through their attacks upon the property and bodies of their neighbour. Let the priest be dispensed from opposing those vices which pertain in any degree to temporal matters ; let him be dispensed from encouraging those virtues also which pertain thereto, such as justice, temperance, patience, or charity ; let him be dispensed from preventing, or repairing injustice, or other offences against the person or property of our neighbour, and his ministry will be reduced to nought.

It is evident, that in order to fulfil his mission of saving souls, the priest has occasion to decide cases pertaining to temporal matters a thousand times oftener in the tribunal of conscience, than the civil magistrate in the tribunal of the law ; and if his character is not in any degree degraded thereby, why should that of the magistrate ?

*Ques.*—The ecclesiastical power owes its exaltation to the sublime end to which it directs everything ; whereas the secular power, being confined within the limits of time and matter, is as far below the priesthood as the body is below the soul, and the earth below Heaven.

*Ans.*—If the secular power confines itself within the limits of time and matter, and chooses to regard those it governs simply as animals, the fault is its own, and that fault is a crime : it wilfully blinds itself to the august duties of its office, and places itself in an impossibility of fulfilling them.

Clearly understand this : that decided division between spiritual and temporal interests which would assign the care of the former to the priesthood, and of the latter to the State, is one of those senseless notions which can be entertained by fools alone. God has united the two substances which form our nature in such a manner, that they can and may be distinguished from each other, but not separated, under pain of killing the body, and of transporting the soul out of this world. The soul partakes of all the organic functions, and is connected in various ways, through the organs, with the exterior substance of the body. In like manner, the organs take part even in the most highly spiritual operations of the soul, and the man who is not aware



that the more refined, deep, and intellectual are our thoughts, the greater is the fatigue to certain organs, must have a shallow mind. If, therefore, you desire to confide to the priest everything that interests your soul, you must intrust him with the office of administering justice, of commanding armies, of making the laws and even the most trifling statutes, and of coining and distributing money, for all these things intimately concern the soul. In like manner, if all that concerns order and public tranquillity belongs to the secular power, it is proper that the State should decide everything regarding faith, morals, and discipline; religious doctrine, and the administration of the sacraments, particularly of penance; for that man must be blind who does not perceive the immense influence exercised by all these things over public peace and order. The absurdity of these conclusions proves the absurdity of the principle; that is, of limiting the exercise of either of the two powers to spiritual or temporal matters.

*Ques.*—On what then do you found the distinction between the two powers?

*Ans.*—The eternal foundation of the real connection between the two powers is as follows: the Almighty's intention was not to create two distinct individuals in one,—a spiritual man, and a material man; the latter being temporal, and the former eternal. Man is one, and his destiny is but one. That destiny is commenced and prepared in this life, and fulfilled in the next. In order to bestow existence upon each individual, and assist him in fulfilling his destiny, God has established *human pater-nity*, of which, as I have already said, in my explanation of the Fourth Commandment, there are three branches, *domestic, religious, and civil or political*. These three powers have the same origin—God; the same end, the good education of mankind, which consists in their instruction how to fulfil their eternal destiny, and the same fundamental rule—the law of God. Their offices alone differ from each other.

The priesthood alone is empowered to make known to all, both superiors and inferiors, the law which declares the will of God, and clearly defines good and evil. Its duty is to cause this law to be observed, by the influence of sermons, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the use of spiritual censures and punishments. What the priest does in the Church, parents are bound to do, according to their means, in their own families: they should encourage their children to do good, and to deter them from evil, by word, by example, by rewards and punishments. And what parents do in their own families, the civil power should do in the great family of the State, by framing

just laws, seeing them duly observed, and employing every possible means to encourage virtue and prevent vice. But its duty extends still further. As the priest, in order to guide the soul of man in its spiritual life, and establish social order on *conscience*, which is its original and only secure foundation, must dive, by means of the spiritual sword of the word, into all the details of private, domestic, and public life, so as to render them all conformable to the law of God, and entirely free from evil; in like manner the civil magistrate, armed with the material sword of justice, for the encouragement of virtue and the repression of vice, must interpose in all classes of society, wherever any serious disorder exists. He must interfere in the sanctuary of the family, wherever its peace is seriously compromised by the insubordination of the children, or the tyranny of the parents. He must interfere as the judge of the quarrels that arise, and the crimes committed there; and also as a legislator, empowered to defend parental authority against its rebellious subjects, and against its own mistakes. Moreover, he must interfere in the religious family whenever the laity, by obstinate contempt of the constitution and laws of the Church attempt to usurp or disturb the functions of the priest, or whenever he, rebelling against his superiors, becomes a minister of error and wickedness; but the civil magistrate interferes in these cases, merely as a defender of the order established by the Almighty, and of the ecclesiastical laws designed to maintain that order. If he attempts to constitute himself judge between the priest and his parishioners, between the priest and his bishop, or between the bishop and the Pope, he disturbs the very source of that universal order which he is bound to maintain, and introduces death into the heart of society.

What then is a temporal sovereign in a Christian point of view? He is the *Minister of God*—the exterior protector of that universal order which the ministers of religion, seconded by the heads of families, establish and found in the consciences of *men*. He is, as he used formerly to be denominated, *the bishop of the exterior; the high priest of outward things*; protecting by the legitimate exercise of his power, the most important actions that can be performed here below, viz.: the generation and the education of mankind. Therefore the Church, regarding political sovereignty as a priesthood, has a formula of consecration in her liturgy for sovereigns, as well as for priests; for the sceptre and sword, as well as for the pastoral staff. And though that spirit, which tends to secularize every thing, has caused princes to refuse the sacred unction, and present themselves before the

world, relying for support solely upon the civil law and their unblest sword, the Church has not on that account ceased defending the divine character of their power, and giving them the first place in all religious honours and public prayers, according to that precept of the Apostle, which itself proves the deep veneration entertained both by priests and people for sovereigns, at a time when they appeared most unworthy of it: *I desire therefore, first of all, he wrote to the bishop Timothy, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings, be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in high stations; that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all piety and chastity; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.\**

Let me ask whether that is degrading the power of the State?

*Ques.*—No; it is probable that the wonderfully zealous upholders of the power of the government against the encroachments of the priesthood, have but one end in thus embroiling the two powers, namely: to destroy one by means of the other, and set up the unlimited despotism of revolutionary autocracy, on the ruins of monarchy and of the priesthood.

*Ans.*—If each man has not actually that end in view, at least all forward it. But if it is easy to ruin the most powerful kingdoms of this world, by setting them in opposition to the religious empire founded by Christ; history proves how that empire itself can resist all the despotisms both of revolutionary and of conservative autocracy. Its constitution and its laws, surviving the hundreds and thousands of governments and political codes, which are buried in the ruins of the past, do not allow a sensible mind to examine seriously the question—

*Is the Church invested with the power of making laws?*

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## THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

1. *To keep certain appointed days holy, with the obligation of resting from servile work.*
2. *To hear Mass on all Sundays and Holidays of obligation.*

*Ques.*—Why should there be any holidays, when the religious rest of the Sunday is sufficient for the sanctification of our souls, and the repose of our bodies?

\* 1st Epistle to Tim. ii. 1—4.

*Ans.*—On what grounds do you assert so decidedly, that the Sunday's rest is sufficient for the necessities of both soul and body? Certainly not upon the authority of the only competent legislator of souls and bodies. What nation ever had so many festivals as the Jews, who were obliged, by the law delivered upon Mount Sinai, to assemble three times a year in the Temple of Jerusalem, from the very extremities of the kingdom? Besides the great solemnities, the first of which, (that of the Pasch) lasted seven days, the chosen people had a festival every seven years, which did not last less than 365 days, (the Sabbatical year.) Neither do you found such an opinion upon the experience of modern times. Show me any Protestant nations in which the suppression of holidays has contributed to the real sanctification of the Sunday, and to the moral and material prosperity of all classes of society. Neither can it have been upon the testimony of the most Christian and industrious classes, for it has been proved that these classes have always been in favour of numerous holidays, and that attempts made on various occasions by the heads of the Church to diminish the number of festivals have often failed, owing to the resistance made by the people.\*

What reason and what authority then can you have for desiring (I do not say a prudent diminution of the number of holidays), but their entire suppression? Examine carefully, and you will soon find that you have nothing in your favour but the theories of anti-Christian philosophers and economists: theories which, by diffusing everywhere the brutal worship of sensual pleasures, have bestowed upon theatres, public-houses, and other places devoted to debauchery, the time stolen from Christian festivals; have encouraged the excesses both of luxury and of poverty, and have thus prepared the way for those social butcheries, against which we are now struggling.

*Ques.*—There is some truth in what you say; but ought we not to take into consideration the social position in which we have been placed by the progress of arts and of civilization? Considering the crowded populations of the large towns, and the principal seats of industry, who live from day to day, labouring hard whenever they can obtain work, and resting necessarily when they cannot obtain it; considering the honourable but incessant war maintained by the inhabitants of Europe on the ground of manufactural and commercial industry; a war increased by the wonderful perfection, to which our means of

\* See Bergier *Diction. Théolog.*, art. *Fêtes*.

fabrication and intercommunication have been brought, and destined by the approaching triumph of *free trade* to prove fatal to all idle nations; considering all this, is it not clear, that any nation devoting fewer hours to labour will soon fall into want, and thence into demoralization?

*Ans.*—Certainly, we must take into consideration the social condition in which we are placed, for such a condition really is death. Is it the progress of mechanic art which has brought us to so fatal a pass? No; our machines are innocent of the evil ascribed to them, and receive maledictions from the ignorant alone. Among all true Christian nations, the natural effect of the perfection to which the means of production, fabrication, and trade are brought, would be to increase the comforts of the people, and diminish manual labour. If the wonderful progress we have made in mechanism has only served to increase the numbers of those who either starve or work like galley-slaves, good sense requires that we should attribute such results, not to the machines themselves, but to the spirit of those who employ them.

Should we ascribe our situation to the progress of civilization? In order to speak seriously of the progress of civilization, it would be as well for us to wait until we are no longer threatened with the most fearful barbarism. It is clear, that the crowds of working people who have assembled in our towns and manufacturing districts, have created wants and desires which were unknown to our forefathers; but to fancy that a proof of the progress of civilization, is blindness indeed. If you still have any doubts on the subject, read the conscientious work of M. Villermé, on *the physical and moral position of workmen in France*.<sup>\*</sup> As for England, which is the model country of modern civilization, read the equally conscientious, but far more terrifying *Studies* of M. Léon Faucher.<sup>†</sup> Both speak only of what they have seen, quote none but official documents, are evidently filled with the deepest respect for religion and morality, but at the same time, cannot possibly be suspected of Jesuitism. The latter writer even holds opinions concerning the ignorance of the Catholic clergy in affairs of economy, which excite the laughter of all

<sup>\*</sup> See *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine, et de soie, ouvrage entrepris par ordre et sous les auspices de l'Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, par M. Villermé, membre de cette Académie.* (2 vol. Paris, 1840).

<sup>†</sup> *Études sur l'Angleterre, par M. Léon Faucher* (2 vol. Paris, 1845). See also *de l'Action de la noblesse, et des classes supérieures dans les sociétés modernes, d'après les documents officiels, par M. L. Mounier, avec des remarques, par M. Rubichon* (Paris, 1848).

who have examined into the history of the priesthood and of Europe.\* When, by dint of extolling the worship of material interests men have succeeded in re-establishing all over Europe, what Christianity had abolished, viz.: *a secondary species of men*, men, who though free by the law, are, in fact, fallen as low as the slaves of antiquity, who live and die without knowing whether they have a soul, who consider their children as fit for nothing but to be sold for a glass of brandy, and who quit the hell of labour only to fall headlong into that of drunkenness and the most filthy debauchery; when we see people of this sort a prey to the most frightful misery, as much through their own reckless improvidence as through the scarcity and uncertainty of work, and only waiting for leaders better versed than themselves in the science of insurrection, to devastate the whole kingdom with fire and sword, is it sensible, or even decent, under such circumstances, to boast of the progress of civilization?

*Ques.*—It may be said, an excess of civilization is next door to barbarism.

*Ans.*—This pretended axiom is only one of the many nonsensical ideas circulated by men of weak minds. I will not stop to prove, that a nation *perfectly civilized*, would be the very one which had got rid of the last remains of the leaven of barbarism, and in which the strictest morality and the strong spirit of brotherly love reigned undisturbed. I return to the first objection, in order to induce you to observe, that our social convulsions require a very different remedy from an increase of labour, and triumph of the theory of *free trade*.

The theory of free trade, considered as an abstract principle,

\* “Neither the Catholic priest nor the Protestant manufacturer understands what are the necessary conditions of labour. The former, having neither a family nor country, exiling himself in his sacred character as in a solitude, seeks perpetually to detach the hearts of all who approach him, from this world; the latter, placed in the very centre of general movement, and connected with every interest, appears to endeavour to render his position impregnable, and to fortify himself therein against his inferiors.” (*Etudes*, t. I., p. 427). If the Catholic clergy preach nothing but the destruction of family ties, and those of our country, how did they ever succeed in founding, out of the barbarism of the middle ages, that Christian society, which was so powerful, on account of the religious attachment felt by each man for his family and his country, that the philosophers, economists, and lecturers on *the normal conditions of labour*, required more than three centuries to annihilate it? A man possessed of learning and talent, must expect to be asked this or similar questions when he attempts to speak of what priests know and do, without ever having questioned them, or seen their doings.

is one very likely to fascinate idealists, but that it may not be fatal in practice, two things are required from the people who allow it. 1st, Entire equality in physical and intellectual strength, and in the extent of political, geographical and territorial power; 2ndly, sufficient moderation and wisdom to prevent any ruinous competition. That England, possessing such abundance of iron, steel, and human machines, and a soil which conceals coal-pits of inexhaustible riches; that England, which employs three-fourths of her inhabitants in public manufactories, and can induce her slavish populace to toil uninterruptedly, eighteen or twenty hours for a morsel of bread; that England, which has in India more than a hundred millions of serfs, who can be taxed at pleasure; that England, which covers the ocean with vessels employed in importing raw material, and in glutting every market with the produce of her manufactures; that England should be in favour of free trade, can be easily believed. By inducing other nations to join in unlimited competition with her and with each other, she would procure labour for the masses of degraded and starving people, who give her reason to tremble for her very existence; and the inevitable ruin of the continent would procure the monopoly of industry and universal trade for the capitalists of England, and enable them to maintain the most anomalous and inhuman position, both in society and politics.

You must perceive that the interests of the continental nations are completely at variance with such a system. Their moral and material diseases, and the great dangers which these diseases produce, are evidently the work of the Anglo-mania; and these nations can be saved only by the most energetic opposition to the spirit of English policy. The struggle will not be long, for whoever is in good health, and is only forty years of age, may hope to see England return to the true spirit of Christianity, or else pay to God and man the debt she owes for having assumed the inglorious mission of re-establishing slavery on a footing of barbarity unknown to the ancients. In fact, the lawgivers of antiquity, by declaring slaves to be domestic property, gave the masters an interest in the proper preservation of those working machines. The English law abandons the people to be worked at will by their masters, and by the gift of legal independence secures to the workers the liberty of becoming as depraved as they please, and of dying of hunger.

How can the people be guided out of the paths of moral and physical degradation into those of real civilization? By recalling them to that belief and those practices through which Europe

triumphed by turns over the defilements of Pagan barbarism, the floods of the barbarism of the middle ages, and the storms of Mussulman barbarism; by teaching them to solemnize those events which have changed the face of the globe, and induced men to look after their souls, and regard one another as brethren during their journey towards their everlasting abode.

In fact, what are Catholic holidays? They are the public expression of the joy, gratitude, and love, with which events, so far superior to all other events, should inspire Christians: the birth, labours, sufferings, death, triumphs, and adorable institutions of God made man, and crucified for the salvation of all. They are also the expression of that just respect which the Christian family owes to that Woman who was *blessed amongst women*: devotion to whom, as I showed in the first article of the Creed, has been the means of restoring woman to her proper position, and rendering her capable of fulfilling her noble office as *the first instructress of man*. Finally, they are in commemoration of the Apostles, Martyrs, and other great men, who, by their heroic self-devotion and unwearying labours, have acquired an imperishable right to the gratitude of all civilized people.

A nation nourished in these noble ideas will always possess sufficient physical strength to force the most barren soil to furnish it with sustenance. Above all, it will be charitable enough not to let its poor starve. Believe me, the Christian art of making a good use of riches is far more important to a nation, than the art of multiplying them to excess, and heaping up mountains of gold by the side of abysses of poverty.

On the other hand, I agree that until an improved system of politics has, by dint of patience and wisdom, re-established the equilibrium of society, by inducing the overplus of the working classes, who now crowd the towns even to suffocation, to employ themselves in agricultural labours, an increase in the number of festivals would give rise to evil results both in regard to morality and economy. In the country, the hands would be too few to allow of a diminution in the number of their hours of work. In the towns, the spirit of religion would not be strong enough to make the festivals what they ought to be—a powerful means of moral culture.

I need not say how willingly the Catholic priesthood will always agree to any arrangements which circumstances may call for on this point. But it is proper to observe, that as a decrease in the number of holidays would diminish the fatigue of the priests, any zeal for this kind of reformation would expose them to accusations which, although unjust, would not be the less pre-



judicial to the confidence they ought to enjoy, in order to be able to do good.\*

### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

*To keep the days of Fasting and Abstinence appointed by the Church.*

*Ques.*—With regard to the laws of fasting and abstinence, I hope you will acknowledge that they are purely ecclesiastical, and that the Church might suppress them without prejudice to the law of the Gospel.

*Ans.*—And with a little reflection I hope you will acknowledge that you are mistaken. This law, taken literally, certainly was instituted by the Church, but if we look to its sense and consequences, it evidently was an inspiration of the Gospel.† What, indeed, is the Gospel, but one unceasing exhortation to elevate

\* I will here give one example out of many others. At the period of the Concordat of 1801, a certain curé having warmly opposed from the pulpit all the objections made by his parishioners against the suppression of the holidays, one of the oldest and most respected men of the neighbourhood went and said to him as he was leaving the church—"M. le Curé, you are young, and I am the oldest man in the place, allow me to give you a piece of advice. When your superiors send you orders, or pastorals, read them to us, whatever they may be, for such is your duty; but do not attempt to make us *like* a measure, which, among other strange changes, deprives us of fifteen day's rest in the year, to bestow it upon you. You would only be losing your time."

† In fact, throughout the New Testament we find fasting practised, praised, and recommended. In Luke ii. we are told that Anna, the prophetess, *departed not from the temple by fastings and prayers, serving night and day*. Christ promises a reward to it. Matt. vi. 16—18. He tells us that some devils are not to be cast out but by prayer and *fasting*. Matt. xvii. 20; Mark ix. 28. He prescribes rules for fasting. Matt. vi. 16—19. He declares it shall be practised after his Ascension by his true disciples. Matt. ix. 15. He began his public career by a fast of forty days. Matt. iv. And no precept ought to be more binding upon a Christian than the example of Christ. When he was transfigured, the only two who appeared in glory with him had each fasted in like manner forty days. His precursor, John the Baptist, kept a perpetual fast, living only on the coarsest food.

The Apostles and first Christians fasted. By fasting, the Apostles sought and obtained worthy co-partners in the sacred ministry. Acts xiii. 3; xiv. 22. Fasting is reckoned by St. Paul among the badges of a true minister. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, 6. He often fasted himself. 2 Cor. xi. 29; Acts ix. 9.

In reply to all this weight of Scriptural testimony, the adversary of fasting will sometimes bring forward such texts as Matt. xv. 11, which

our souls by faith, and to subdue our bodies by penance, to reduce them to servitude, to crucify their concupiscences, and make them always *bear about the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.\** Now what can be more conducive to that end than privations, fasting, and abstinence? And among the different means of chastising the body, could the Church have made a milder choice? Should you have preferred the Church, instead of diminishing the number of our meals at certain periods, and forbidding the use of some kinds of foods, to have ordered us to wear hair shirts, take the discipline, make lengthened prayers during the night, or sleep on bare boards, or on the floor?

*Ques.*—I should not like to take upon myself to make the enemies of fasting and abstinence relish such a commutation!

*Ans.*—Nevertheless, we must mortify our flesh, and not be of the number of those *whose God is their belly, and whose end, as St. Paul tells us, is destruction,†* unless we are prepared to trample under foot both the letter and the spirit of the Gospel, and go against the consciences of all men, who never have separated the idea of penance from the idea of religion.‡ What!

has evidently nothing to do with the subject; some stern reproofs uttered by one or other of the prophets against certain *abuses*, of which the Jews were guilty in their fasts; also 1 Tim. iv. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 8; 1 Cor. x. 25; Col. ii. 16; Luke x. 8. We have not space here to examine these texts in detail, but whoever will do so cannot fail to perceive—1st, that to understand them as Protestants in general seem to understand them, is to make the inspired word of God self-contradictory; 2nd, that the full meaning of each of these texts is quite compatible with Catholic doctrine, while the texts quoted above are quite incompatible with Protestant sentiments.—Tr.

\* 2 Cor. iv. 10.

† Philipp. iii. 18, 19.

‡ An objection frequently made by our adversaries to all practices of penance is, that God is too good to be pleased with the sufferings of his creatures, whom he loves with an everlasting love. Yes; God is infinitely good and loving, but he is also just; and those who thus extol his goodness at the expense of his justice, forget that we are sinners, and that God has ever chastised sin. Open the Bible, and see the heavy punishments he has sent upon his creatures from the very beginning, when they fell into sin. Yet he was always infinitely good and loving; he is yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same.

You who say God's goodness prevents his desiring that sin should be punished, look upon Calvary, and see the accumulated sufferings of his beloved and spotless Son, when charged with the weight of our sins. Look around the world, and see the sufferings with which it has been filled ever since sin entered it, so that it is justly styled *a vale of tears*, and yet God loves all the creatures that he has made. Can you then dare to say that it is not God's will that we should punish ourselves, sinners as we are, that he may regard us with mercy!—Tr.

do we behold in Asia more than a hundred millions of the followers of Brahma, condemning themselves to a perpetual Lent, depriving themselves, from religious motives, of the flesh of all animals whatsoever, whether terrestrial, ærial, or aquatic, and abstaining from the use of all animal productions, such as leather, wool, etc. ; do we behold the followers of Mahomet never tasting wine, and fasting during the Ramadan far more rigourously than the Trappists ;\* and shall the adorers of the true God who have seen the Holy of Holies condemn himself to a martyrdom of more than thirty years, and then expire in the most excruciating torments to *take away the sins of the world*, fancy that they may scorn the idea of abstinence? Shall they throw off, as an unsupportable yoke, that fasting which was consecrated by the example of the Son of God himself, and without which, together with prayer, he said some *kinds of devil could not be cast out*.† Can there be a more senseless idea than that the religion of *the cross* exempts its followers from all penitential practices?‡ Surely such an idea can enter the mind only of public-house philosophers, or of imbecile *Bible readers*, who, so far as concerns understanding the Gospel, would never get further than the edifying *table-talk* of the *glorious* Reformer, Luther.

The religious duty of mortifying our sensual passions once acknowledged, the obligation of regulating that duty necessarily falls upon the Church. What would be the result of leaving such regulations to the devotion of each individual? The careless and tepid, that is to say, by far the greater number, would never be able to find either time or opportunity to do penance at all, whilst the fervent would be always filled with anxiety, and

\* I mean during the day, from sunrise to sunset, for nothing can prevent a religious Mussulman from giving to debauchery all the night time, viz., from sunset to sunrise.

† Matt. xvii. 20.

‡ Protestants are fond of saying that penitential exercises ignore the one and only atonement. Let them, however, remember in the first place, that the fault, if fault there be in this respect, will exist equally in the one day's fast and humiliation of the Protestants of England, when suffering under some grievous calamity, as in the forty days' fast of Lent, observed by the children of the Catholic Church.

In the second place, practices of penance, far from ignoring, have their origin in this very atonement. It is the sight of the sufferings and the humiliations of the innocent Lamb of God, which urges his loving and grateful disciples to punish in themselves those sins for which he was scourged and crucified. It is the ardent and longing desire of being in some degree conformed to the model shown us on Calvary, which makes our martyrs rejoice to suffer.—Tr.

never think that they had done enough. Nothing, therefore, can be wiser than to have a general law for urging on the slothful, and restraining the fervent. And I can assure you that the observance of this law, so absolutely necessary for our eternal salvation, has more influence than is generally thought upon our welfare in this world, with regard to morality, health, commerce, and agriculture.

*Ques.*—That is a statement which many will disbelieve.

*Ans.*—Yes; among the moon-eyed race now so numerous. If you do not belong to that class, I would recommend you to meditate upon the following subjects:

I.—A man who cannot restrain his body from transgressing the Commandments of the Church, will not either be able to restrain it from transgressing the Commandments of God. He will sometimes find as much weakness of mind in abstaining from those excesses which bring shame, dishonour, and death into families, as he does in abstaining on Friday from what he eats on Thursday. If you can meet with one single person who habitually despises the third Commandment of the Church, and yet is irreproachable in his observance of the sixth and ninth Commandments of God (unless in the case of a peculiar temperament) you will have made a wonderful discovery. *Prayer*, which strengthens the life of the soul, and *fasting*, which moderates that of the body, are the matchless arms given us by the Master of all virtue against the demon of lust.

II.—If you allow contempt of the laws of fasting and abstinence to become general, the seventh and tenth Commandments: *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife . . . . nor his goods*, would be first set aside, and then systematically opposed, as sanctioning a great social iniquity. If you seek the general cause of crimes against property, and of the wonderful success of the *admirable* doctrines of Communism, you will find that the cause consists in a horror of privations and abstinence, and in the sensual dogma: "man is made only to eat, and enjoy himself."

III.—Consult upon this subject the writings of those physicians who have been the most distinguished for depth and breadth of thought, and you will there find excellent reasons why, for our health's sake, there should be forty days fasting and abstinence.

IV.—Raise your thoughts higher still. Cast a glance upon that immense Ocean which occupies so large a portion of our globe, which rolls between land and land, and divides the earth into

continents. In the depths of the ocean there live an infinite multitude of the animal species, the fecundity of which surpasses that of terrestrial animals, even beyond all calculation,\* and the flesh of which would be more than sufficient to feed the entire human race. See now, how, in order to save us the trouble of seeking them afar off, the best species of these fish leave every spring the frozen seas of the Polar regions, swim in close columns along the coasts of Asia, Europe, and America, and offer themselves, as it were, to the nets of the fisherman. Now, considering the perfection to which our means of conveyance, both by land and sea, are brought, calculate the immense advantages which would result from a greater consumption of fish. 1st, For the food of the masses of people who scarcely live upon anything but corn of an inferior quality, vegetables, and roots. 2ndly, For the encouragement of fishery and trade. 3rdly, For the preservation and increase of our cattle, which are never so numerous as we require for food and labour. 4thly, For the good of the soil itself, which is injured by the decrease in the number of cattle, by the loss of strength in the arms that cultivate it, and by the rapid disappearance of the sources of its fertility. You have not forgotten what I told you in one of my former chapters, about the necessity of animal substances being employed to render the earth fertile.† Now, it is very probable that by increasing the rich tribute offered us by the sea, we should be better able to preserve a general equilibrium, and we should restore to the earth a portion of those precious salts, those vegetable oils, and other known and unknown elements, the loss of which is felt, and may, perhaps, be the cause of more than one scourge.

I think I have said enough to bring you to this conclusion. Possibly the same Divine Spirit which assisted the Catholic Church in the establishment of her laws, established also the laws of moral and physical order, so that by living in habitual neglect of the former, Christians may really be labouring at their own physical and moral ruin.

\* There is a species of herring of which one female alone contains ten million eggs.

† Book I., Fact 1st.

## THE FOURTH AND FIFTH COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

4. *To confess our sins to our pastors at least once a year.*
5. *To receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter, or thereabouts.*

*Ques.*—You are aware what a storm of objections is raised against these two Commandments, but particularly the first.

*Ans.*—Yes; and as this storm began with the Commandments, and will probably continue as long as they do, it furnishes us with good proofs of their strength. I think I have answered most of those objections in the works which I have written upon the Sacraments of Penance and of the Blessed Eucharist. My intention in this work being, not to justify the articles of the Catholic faith one by one, but to point out to you the links which bind them to each other, and make of them one indivisible whole, you must allow me not to make any alteration in my plan; and I hope the result will be that I shall furnish you with a decided answer to all objections against *the Philosophy of the Catholic Catechism*.

If the Catholic Church has made use of her legislative powers it certainly has not been through an empty desire of show, like certain law manufacturers, who fancy that they immortalize their names by publishing more laws in a single year than an entire nation could in the same time read. In what does the universal legislation of a government which has lasted eighteen hundred years, and extends over the entire universe, consist? In some half dozen lines, which a child can learn in one lesson, and which can be repeated in the space of a minute. And what is the object of these few lines? To apply the different ordinances of the Divine Law to all and to each. In fact, what is the end of the first Commandment of the Church: *To keep certain appointed days holy*, etc.? It is to substitute Christian in the place of Jewish solemnities, which last were ordered by the law given on Mount Sinai. What is the object of the second: *To hear mass on all Sundays and holidays*, etc.? It is to substitute in the place of those various sacrifices, by which the Jews commemorated the creation of the world, and the promise of its regeneration, that adorable sacrifice which has operated the redemption of mankind, put the seal to the treaty of the eternal alliance, and opened the road of truth and life to all men of good will.

By these two Commandments, the Church provides for the first necessity of the soul, religious instruction, which instruction is given by the preaching of the word of God, is rendered fruitful by public prayer, and takes possession of all the faculties of the soul by the different ceremonies of divine worship. You may already have seen that an exact observance of these two precepts would be the best safeguard against barbarism. Let us now proceed to the terrible Commandment.

*To confess our sins to our pastors, at least once a year.*—What are we here commanded? To labour at the accomplishment of the work of redemption in our own souls, to fulfil the end for which the Son of God submitted even to the death of the cross. And what was that end? The sanctification of our souls through the forgiveness of our sins. Now, the manner in which we were to obtain the forgiveness of our sins was ordained by Jesus Christ, when he said to his ministers, after having *breathed upon them: Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.\** Hence, every Christian is obliged to submit his offences to the judgment of those who are invested with the power of forgiving or retaining them, according to the necessities or dispositions of the penitent. What does the Church do upon this head? She simply decides how long the least fervent souls may be allowed to defer the fulfilment of a duty which is indispensable for the life of a Christian. Has she been too severe in restricting the time to one year? The obligations of a Christian being what you know they are, I ask, do you think that an adult can spend a year without feeling the necessity of purifying his soul, at least once, in the sacrament of penance, and drawing from it, as also from the holy Communion, the strength required for constantly practising all Christian virtues, and for preserving his soul from the contagion of sin?

*Ques.*—If not impossible for all, it would at least be very difficult for most; for the year is long, and man's virtue very weak.

*Ans.*—Have you not yourself now said sufficient to justify the general law of the Church on this subject, and to silence all the complaints that are made?

Believe me, those souls who at the end of a year think they have done nothing against the law of God, will still be of the same opinion at the close of their career. Now, those pure souls, who, during the whole course of their lives, cannot find out a

\* John xx. 22, 23.

single stain or fault to bewail, to repair, and to confess, will probably at the judgment-seat of Christ find out a number sufficient to justify the Institutor of the Sacrament of Penance in imposing upon them a penance that will never end.

But the Sacrament of Penance is not only the especial means furnished by the Saviour of souls *for the remission of sins committed after baptism*. If we consider the acts which precede, accompany, and follow its reception, namely, the examination of conscience, contrition, a firm purpose of amendment, the confession of the sins, the advice of the confessor, and the reparation of the evil committed, commonly called satisfaction ; if we consider it in this point of view, the Sacrament of Penance is the most, or rather the only efficacious means of applying the rule of faith and Christian morality to individuals. It is in fact Christianity placing itself within the reach of all, and proportioning itself to the wants and condition of each, entering into every conscience to enlighten the most secret doubts of the soul, dissipate its illusions, prevent its falls, and cause it to walk in the footsteps of the divine model of the elect.

In one word, it is practical Christianity, which alone can save souls and bodies, both in this life and in the next. Once take away the helm of confession, and the soul will be driven before the wind of the passions in a thousand contrary directions. A vague, general, indefinite kind of Christianity will alone remain ; it will be talked about, certainly, but much in the same manner as men talk about rain, or fine weather ; its precepts, left to the commentaries of each individual, will have little more influence on morality than our observations have on the state of the atmosphere.

This unbounded moral influence of confession has struck all who reflect deeply, whether Catholics, Protestants, or Infidels. I recommend you to read the *Letters of Atticus*, dedicated to Louis XVIII., by Lord Fitz-William (London, 1811) ; you will find in them an excellent demonstration of a thesis, which certainly was an extraordinary one for a Protestant author to choose : *Virtue, justice, and morality ought to be the foundation of all governments. It is impossible to lay the foundations of virtue, justice, and morality, with the slightest degree of solidity, without the tribunal of Penance . . . . . which belongs exclusively to the Roman Catholics. It is impossible to establish the tribunal of Penance without belief in the Real Presence, which is one of the chief foundations of the Roman Catholic faith. Therefore it is impossible to establish any government that can be either lasting*



*or advantageous, unless it is supported by the Roman Catholic religion.\**

The Rationalist, Pierre Leroux, acknowledges the same thing. Comparing the social order established by the Catholic Church with that which modern innovators wished to substitute in its place, he addresses these few eloquent words to the latter: "And what restraint have you left those unhappy wretches, and what rule of life have you given them? You have banished Christ from their hearts—Christ, who commanded all men in the name of God to love one another, and who promised a sure haven to the afflicted. *But are you aware that it is a most frightful thing to have retained the executioner, after having banished the confessor?*"†

Finally, as Lord Fitz-William very justly remarks, the fourth commandment: *To confess our sins*, etc., is inseparable from the fifth: *To receive the blessed Sacrament*, etc. Now what has the Church done by making this commandment? She has simply provided for the fulfilment of the divine commandment, which is comprised in these words: *Take and eat, this is my body. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you; unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.*‡ The faithful are required to partake only once a year of this heavenly banquet, which our Lord declares to be indispensable for the life of the soul; certainly that is not exaggerating the divine command, or rendering it too burdensome, but rather it is carrying condescension to its utmost limits.

With regard to the immense importance of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Sacrament in the Christian religion, allow me to refer you to what I have said elsewhere.§ At present I will make but one reflection. The great aim of Christianity is to unite men to their heavenly Father, and cause them to love one another as members of one and the same body. Our divine Lord brings about this union, and the principal means which he makes use of is: *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him.*

\* See the *summary* of the Book, end of the letter, etc.

† See *Revue Indépendante*, tom. I. p. 1—20.

‡ Matthew, xxvi. 26; John, vi. 54—57.

§ See *La Solution de Grands Problèmes*, Vol. II. ch. xxxviii.—xlii.; also *l'Emmanuel où les Remèdes à tous nos maux*.

What is that charity which fulfils the whole law? The supernatural fruit of our incorporation with Jesus, which is begun by baptism, increased by confirmation, restored or secured by penance, and nourished and perfected by our *transubstantiation* into Christ, at the banquet of the Holy Communion. When once men keep away from this source of Christian life, they immediately fall back into their natural life, and their natural life is egotism, the consequence of egotism is disunion, and the consequence of disunion is barbarism and death.

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## CONCLUSION

### OF THE THIRD BOOK.

*Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is all man, says the Scripture.\** Yes; that is all man, man viewed either individually or collectively, man considered in all his various connections both with the spiritual and with the material world, with the domestic family, with the national family, and with the vast family of mankind.

The Decalogue, as promulgated and applied by the Catholic Church, is the only code of laws which can unite and direct individuals, families, nations, and all mankind in the path which leads to temporal and eternal happiness. All laws not founded upon this decalogue lead to death.

Almighty God possesses two immense advantages over the most able legislators—universal knowledge and power.

God thoroughly knows men, their past, their present, their future; the world in which their education is begun, and the world in which it is completed. He knows all things, because he is the Creator of all. He it is who established and who preserves the union between the millions of atoms which compose our organisation, the connection of our organisation with all matter organic and inorganic, and the connection of our mind with our body, and with all other minds. It is therefore certain, that in the law which he has given us, however short it may be, none of the minutest details, imperceptible to the eyes of man, have been overlooked, that all interests have been reconciled, and that men have but to obey this law, in order to

\* Ecclesiastes, xii. 13.

obtain, as he himself tells us, *incorruption, which bringeth near to God and to the everlasting kingdom.*\*

God possesses universal power. The chapter of accidents, which exercises so great an influence over human policy, and disconcerts so many projects, never can affect the divine government. The submission of the physical universe to its Creator is absolute. Angels and men were created free to obey or transgress the law given them; but their transgressions were foreknown by God, and make no difference whatever in his universal arrangements. Whether the sinner flaunts upon a throne, or skulks in a cavern, whether he is in the full enjoyment of health, or sinking into the grave, he is equally subject to the power of God; by resisting his mercy he falls into the hands of his justice, *he opens a pit, where death shall feed upon him.*† It is therefore evident that God is the only legislator who can oblige all nations to submit to his laws, and there is not in fact, under the sun, a country which does not furnish its contingent of subjects to the Catholic Decalogue.

Europe had flourished during the space of twelve centuries under this divine legislation, which had become the foundation and soul of all its laws and institutions; it had distanced those nations which human legislation had condemned to perpetual childhood, when about the year 1520, some wretched quacks began to exclaim, that it had missed its road, and that the torch of the Gospel having been extinguished for some centuries by the hands of the papacy, now only diffused the smoke of hell and rendered the darkness more intense. A portion of political Europe applauded these religious quacks, and thenceforth made every effort to contrive the downfall of Catholicism.

In those States which remained faithful to the universal religion, philosophical and political quacks soon made their appearance, and insisted that the Catholic religion was good, at the very utmost, only to save souls, but that it ought to have nothing to do with the government of society, which having been founded by the free will of men, belonged exclusively to human legislation, and that it was time for nations victimised by the barbarous institutions of the middle ages, to have laws and constitutions suitable to their requirements, and to the universal diffusion of knowledge.

Since these ideas became rife in the political world, how many gigantic efforts have been made to form model govern-

\* Wisdom, vi. 19—21.

† Psalms, vii. 16; xlviii. 15.

ments and perfect codes ! Certainly, the genius of invention has not been at fault. There have been inventive geniuses by dozens on the throne, by hundreds and thousands among the nobility of the gown and of the pen, drunk with the *spirit of the laws* ; by millions in the streets, guided by the *social contract*. Some have even been found among men who have only just escaped the hulks or the scaffold, and their teaching has been even better attended than that of Montesquieu and Rousseau (Babeuf, Mazzini).

All antiquity cannot boast of more than eight or ten lawgivers, and the result of their united labours would not more than fill a moderately-sized volume. Modern policy has but to show a sheet of paper, called a *Constitutional Charter*, and the most diminutive State speedily produces three or four hundred lawgivers. Its legislative fecundity is almost past belief. Twenty chariots, each drawn by four pair of oxen, would scarcely be able to carry the countless heaps of laws, decrees, and reports, which it produces in half a century.

Meanwhile, whither were we advancing under the guidance of so many geniuses ? We were advancing from revolution to revolution, until we were on the brink of the one which threatened to bury the last remains of society in mire and blood.

Fortunately, the large body of Christian Europe was still in existence beneath political Europe, and that large body prayed, laboured, talked but little of politics, read still less about them, never wrote, and persisted in believing that the best of all laws were the commandments of God, and that form of government the most perfect which was the most Christian. Their sighs, which were always drowned here below by the thunder of the legislative tribunals, and the yelpings of the press, yet made their way to heaven in this shape : " How long, O Lord, wilt thou leave the nations enlightened by thee in the power of these blind guides ? *Appoint, O Lord, a lawgiver over them, that the nations may know themselves to be but men,*\* and that it belongeth not to man to remodel those people who have been regenerated, and instructed by thee ! "

It seems as though this prayer has been heard. In that country which has so much influence over the rest of Europe, at the very moment when the most intrepid were beginning to despair, a legislator arose, who imposing silence with one beck

\* *Constitué, Domine, legislatorem super eos, ut sciant gentes quia homines sunt.*—Psalms, ix. 21.

upon the Parliaments of France, and dispersing the armies of socialism, addressed himself to all true Frenchmen, and asked them the following question: "Frenchmen, do you desire a strong government, one that will redress your grievances, and assist you to break off for ever with the *theories of ideologists*, and *false gods*, in order to return to the commandments of Christ, and recover, both within and without, the position which belongs to you as the oldest of Christian nations? Answer, yes or no!" You are acquainted with the repeated answers of the French. This nation, lately so disunited and deemed ungovernable, particularly by a ruler at once religious and monarchical, has placed upon the throne, with unexampled unanimity and enthusiasm, a prince whose actions promise still more loudly than his words, that France shall have a really Christian government.

At the same time that France presents so wonderful a spectacle to the world, Catholic Germany also hails with joy her young emperor, who has begun his reign by an open rupture with the ecclesiastical despotism of Joseph II., and the false liberalism of the political assemblies, and who has determined that the liberty of the Church, and a good understanding with her, shall form the basis of his government.

In the deep sympathy which has been excited by the conduct of these two princes, we behold the natural testimony of the gratitude of men towards their deliverers, and the testimony of the sovereign ruler of all, who fulfils his promise to the chiefs of the people: *Whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify.\** A great lesson has also been given to political Europe, and we have reason to hope that it will soon realise those prophetic words of the author of the *Génie du Christianisme*, at the conclusion of his immortal work:

"Perhaps the day will come when the various forms of government, except despotism, will appear indifferent, and men simply obey the laws of morality and religion, which in fact form the steady basis of society, and contain the true principles of human government."

\* 1 Kings, ii. 30.

## OBJECTIONS.

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### CHAPTER I.

*That the Objections against the Catholic Religion are endless, which is a strong proof of its divinity.*

*Ques.*—The first question which presents itself is : Why are there so many objections made against the Catholic religion, and so few against others ?

*Ans.*—Because the Catholic religion presents itself as a sovereign, and insists upon ruling over our souls, in order to reform our inclinations and direct our actions ; whereas the other religions are humble servants that allow our own government of ourselves to be irreproachable, and only ask leave to consecrate the arrangements made, and to guard them against any disturbance. Is it not natural that these religions should be well received, that they should not even be required to produce a certificate, and that when once received they should be tenderly loved, and have their faults overlooked ? Is it not equally natural that the Catholic religion should be rejected as a usurper ; that many should refuse to read its divine certificates ; that some, even after having read and accepted them without reserve, should endeavour to place limits to its authority, and speculate upon its rights and upon the use it makes of them ; in short, that there should remain in the soul a leaven of rebellion, a focus of complaints, murmurs, and endless objections and questions ?

*Ques.*—Nevertheless, all religions impose obligations more or less severe upon their followers, how comes it then that they are not disputed ?

*Ans.*—*Religion* and *obligation* are two words which convey the same meaning to the conscience of man.

With the exception of atheists, pantheists, and deists, who are out of the case, all men believe in the existence of a divine law imposing upon them sacred and inviolable duties. Any religion which did not answer to this belief, and satisfy the

necessity felt by every one of pleasing the supreme Lord of all, and of acquiring a right to his protection and favour both in this world and in the world to come, would not be a religion at all.

Men wish therefore to have religious duties, but such as will exercise the least possible restraint over their dearest, and at the same time most depraved passions. That worship which secures liberty to their passions, particularly the carnal passions, as has been the case with all non-Christian religions, will surely be well received, even if it enjoins inconvenient, absurd, revolting practices, and abominable sacrifices.

The followers of Brahma, who frequent the pagodas of India, do not think they pay too dearly for the extreme lasciviousness of their morals, by burning widows on their husband's funeral pile, by watering the earth with the blood of children, by totally abstaining from meat, from all animal produce and all fermented drinks, by daily anointing of their bodies and furniture with cow-dung, finally, by never killing any animal, not even the vermin which devour them.

The faithful Mussulman prays continually, and would die rather than taste of the juice of the vine, or break the rigorous fast of the Ramadan, so light does he find the yoke imposed on him by that God who says to him, according to the teaching of Mahomet: "Woman is but an animal which I have created for thy use, until thou enterest into the seraglio of *Houris*; make therefore what use thou pleasest of her, unless thou hast other inclinations, which I desire shall not be contradicted!"

With regard to religions self-styled Christian, which have been substituted by the founders of heresies and schisms in the place of the religion of Christ, they have all purchased the favour of the people, and particularly of those classes which are in power, by large concessions. Some, the servants of all, have proclaimed the religious sovereignty of each individual, and have said to their adherents: "You should choose ministers expert in the interpretation of the Bible, but you must continue to be yourselves the judges of what you are to believe and practise" (Protestant religions). Others, the slaves of the government, have preserved a certain degree of authority over the people, but for fear of giving rise to any objections do not sanction any sermons (unless their pope or popess direct an assault against Catholicism), but merely fulfil the functions of religious worship (the schismatic Greek religion and schismatic Russian religion). While heretical and schismatical Churches thus tolerate anything, excepting one single glance in

the direction of that religion which tolerates no error and no irregularity, how can you expect them to be disturbed by objections?

Objections are naturally directed against that religion which is always urging on the slothful and the indifferent, that they may arise from their indifference and sloth; exhorting the sinner and encouraging the saint, that the one may become holy, and the other approach still nearer to perfection. Catholicism is like Ismael, the voice of all men is against it, because its voice is raised against all. In fact, you will not find one single iota of its doctrines and practices which has not given rise to thousands of objections formed by open incredulity, doubt, or a desire of doubting. In this concert of voices and pens, heaping doubts on doubts, difficulties on difficulties, and accusations on accusations, you will find that the voices of Catholics have been the loudest. Be not astonished at this; for it has been chiefly against them that the Church has directed her weapons in her conflict with error and sin.

Such is the spectacle which has been placed before the world ever since the year 32 of the Christian era; and I say that it is a splendid proof of the divinity of Catholicism, and of the utter falseness of all the objections which have been unceasingly directed against it.

*Ques.*—I agree that the number of objections does not prove that the Catholic religion is false, but I do not see that it can prove the falsity of the objections themselves, and the divinity of the Catholic religion.

*Ans.*—Listen to me. Why should there have been so many objections raised, when one real objection would have been sufficient to sink the barque of Catholicism? Supposing Celsus, Julian the apostate, Porphyrius, Arius, and all the early heretics, who have scarcely left anything to the invention of modern heretics and infidels, had found, in their attacks on the Church, one single flaw in the ramparts of her doctrine or the historical proofs of her origin; supposing that the Scriptures, which were familiar to them, as we see from their writings, had presented one vulnerable point or real contradiction; do you not perceive that the whole strength of the enemies of Catholicism would have been turned against that breach, would have enlarged it in no time, and then, penetrating into the interior, would soon have forced the defenders to lay down their arms, or at least to make a treaty with the invaders, and purchase peace? Now, point out to me any such breach in the Catholic Creed; name the period of any such fatal assault, negotiation, or treaty of



peace signed by the Church to the glory of the philosophers and innovators !

The resistance made by Catholicism to this storm of objections, these innumerable attacks directed by able men, whose zeal amounted even to fury, proves not only the uselessness of such assaults, and the strength of the edifice of the Catholic Church, but also the presence of Jesus Christ in this edifice, preventing the natural consequences of objections.

*Ques.*—What are those consequences ?

*Ans.*—Although objections have no power to destroy those divine truths and supernatural facts, which constitute the Catholic religion, yet they are but too successful in obscuring, blackening, and misrepresenting them to men. Consequently, this vast deluge of objections and calumnies would naturally have caused the Church to be deserted by all her children. Nevertheless, that Church which is not satisfied with exposing her children to the fury of the persecutor, and to a ceaseless storm of sarcasms, sophisms, and jeers from the unbeliever, but moreover thwarts their inclinations in every way, and continually exhorts them to do violence to themselves ; that Church, I say, has always had by far the largest portion of the Christian world within her pale. Who does not perceive here the fulfilment of the promise : *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world ?* In fact, the truth alone is incapable of keeping its hold on men, disinclined as they are to fall in love with dogmas, commandments, and practices, which afflict the flesh. Do you not likewise perceive that, in this struggle between the Catholic religion and its enemies, the latter have great advantages on their side ?

*Ques.*—What are those advantages ?

*Ans.*—1st. The grandeur of the Catholic religion, and the pettiness of our minds. As you have seen, nothing can be so great as the Catholic religion in an historical, dogmatical, and moral point of view. Its history is that of mankind, from the beginning to the end of time. Its dogmas tend to give us a knowledge of God, of man, of the universe, and of the links which unite them to each other. Its morality tends to make us, by the accomplishment of all our duties, *perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect.* How difficult is it to bring vulgar minds to a knowledge of so many truths ! Above all, how difficult is it to make such relish them ! Nevertheless, it must be done, if we wish the religious instruction of the faithful to be solid enough to resist all the attacks of the enemy. And what is the aim of the enemy ? Is it to destroy the edifice of

faith piece by piece, and oppose each proof of the Catholic religion by a contrary proof? No, the enemy need but throw the poison of doubt within the walls of the building, which can be done in the course of an instant. He need but strengthen the natural repugnance of the inhabitants for difficult religious duties. In the work of destruction, he may confide in the assistance he will receive from ignorance and vice, two allies which will seldom fail him. The enemies of the Catholic religion have therefore, in the first place, an advantage over its defenders equal to that which an incendiary has over a builder.

2ndly. They have another advantage in being able to choose their own ground and weapons. The defender of universal truth can fight on one ground only, that of truth, and make use of but one weapon, which also must be truth. The historical ground on which Catholicism rests is very vast, and it is by no means a small undertaking to clear it from the heaps of lies which have been raised upon that ground by Protestantism and philosophy. The defender of religion having acquired a clear insight into the historical foundations of his faith, must next obtain an exact knowledge of every part of the dogmas, morality and practices of the Church, justify them by the Scriptures, by tradition, and by their agreement with our moral necessities, finally, he must connect the whole in his mind in such a manner as to be entirely free from any historical, dogmatical, moral, or philosophical error, which might give rise to criticism. How much preparatory study, how much watching and meditation is required, to form a good Catechist! And when a good Catechist is formed, how much devotion, patience, and abnegation of self does he not require, in order to infuse an enlightened conviction of Catholic truth into the minds of men. The spirit of error does not need so many preparations to make proselytes. Free to choose any one of the numerous points which can be attacked in the Catholic system, it is likewise at liberty to choose between philosophical and popular sophism, between undisguised falsehood and underhand deceit, between the most refined and witty mockery and the coarsest and most vulgar sarcasm. Whether it destroys the faith of Catholics upon one or several articles of faith; whether it inspires them with a contempt for one or all of the practices of their religion; whether its efforts are crowned with success by means of the seduction of false knowledge, or by ridiculous tales, what does it care, provided it succeeds in making an unbeliever?

In short, any mind is capable of starting an objection against

Catholicism, any hand qualified to destroy it in the souls of men. The number of minds and hands which have been actively employed against it since its first foundation is incalculable. The number of its defenders really capable of answering the objections, or turning their force against the assailants themselves, has always been comparatively very small. Nevertheless, behold, eighteen centuries have passed away, and the Catholic Church still resists all attacks, and numbers a multitude of nations among her children. Therefore, the Catholic Church is not the work of man.

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## CHAPTER II.

*That besides all the objections which are openly brought forward, there is one which always seeks to conceal itself.*

*Ques.*—What is this bashful objection?

*Ans.*—You may have seen in the last chapter that the common aim of all objections is to enable us to retain the right of governing ourselves, and living as we please. Men desire to have a religion, and will even sacrifice everything to it, except themselves. What clashes with our feelings in the God of the Catholics is his saying: *Whoever will come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me; me, who was obedient even to the death of the cross!* And, as a proof of this self-denial, by which we renounce the guidance of ourselves, Christ requires that we should submit the government of our souls to the control of those to whom he has said: *You are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth; whatsoever you shall bind or loose on earth, shall be bound or loosed in heaven; whose sins you shall forgive, are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, are retained, etc.*

The government of souls, the inspection of consciences! behold what the Catholic religion dares to demand, and what has raised it so many enemies both within and without. Is not the following objection everlastingly made by bad Catholics, and by all the followers of philosophical and biblical rationalism?

“The interior of the conscience ought to be opened to God alone. Whoever believes in the necessity of introducing thither a human inspector, renounces his dignity as a man, and the religion which demands such a sacrifice is a degrading tyranny.”

*Ques.*—Yes; and if this objection is the one you intended to

speak of in this chapter, you were wrong in saying that it seeks to hide itself.

*Ans.*—This objection is only *apparent* in all disputes with the true religion. Believe me, men only appeal to the *direct* government of God, in order to get rid of his *indirect* government through the priest; and men only seek to get rid of his indirect government, for the sake of being entirely free from all restraint, and of saying: “I intend to be at liberty to think and do what I please.” He who *searches the reins and the hearts* cannot be deceived. When the Jews asked to be no longer governed by prophets, God said to Samuel: *They have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them.\** Jesus Christ has also said to his ministers: *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.†* Therefore, the objection which is the foundation of all others, and which hides itself as much as possible in the recesses of the heart, is that one which I described to you in my explanation of the first Commandment (paragraph 11) under the name of the *error which produces all other errors*. It is the idolatry of self; the idea, feeling, and desire of our own Godship; an indescribable something, which induces us first to envy the power, and then to deny the existence of the Most High, who says to us: “*I am who I am*, the author and absolute sovereign of all existence; yesterday you were not, and if to-day you exist, it is because such is my pleasure.” However incontestable, this idea of our nothingness and dependance humbles and irritates us, and we are tempted to answer: *Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?‡*

No doubt there are very few, even among the boldest infidels, who would dare so openly to defy the Almighty. Before proceeding to such extremities, men parley a long time. They say to God: “Be reasonable and moderate in what thou requirest. Reign as a sovereign in heaven, also over all the material universe, the arrangements of which are so perfect, and to the government of which we are unequal. Thou shalt have magnificent temples, and every mouth shall celebrate thy glory. But allow us a little liberty; do not contradict our inclinations, which we imagine proceed from thee, since they are born with us. By ordering us to combat *the old man*, and *crucify our flesh with its vices and concupiscences*, thou wouldst make us believe that thou art not the *good God* whom alone we wish to adore.”

What are all the religions of the universe, excepting the true

\* 1 Kings viii. 7.

† Luke x. 16.

‡ Ps. xi. 5.

one? Negotiations, treaties of peace, by which men have sought to save their own passions by transferring them to their God, saying to him: "We will adore thee, only inasmuch as thou resemblest ourselves." This holds good, both of idolatry which was, and still is, nothing but the adoration of human passions, and of that pretended Christianity which is founded on the principle of private judgment.

In point of fact, what is a follower of the Bible religion? He is a man invested with the right of receiving no other religious law but that which he shall himself have discovered and defined; consequently, a man who adores his own visions and desires, in the Christ of his imagination.

*Man should be God*; such is the dark dogma, which, lurking beneath every religion of man's invention, thence keeps up the fire of objections against the religion of God; a dogma which appeared under the veiled form of Egyptian, Hindoo, and Greek Pantheism; a dogma which, scared at the first dawn of the light of the Gospel, and reduced to take refuge in the writings of a few obscure sectarians of the middle ages, and in the caves of free masonry, now boldly raises its head, throws off the religious, philosophical, and political masks which it has worn by turns, lets fall the blunted weapons of sophistry in order formally to erect the most revolting blasphemies into indisputable articles of faith, renounces means of seduction, for the sake of having recourse to open violence, fans the fanaticism of its adherents into fury by means of secret societies, and urges them to destroy by fire and sword all that could recall the hateful idea of God, the Supreme Lawgiver, or of Divine faith. It is universal error maintaining war against universal truth; it is the last re-action of hell boiling over with wrath at the sight of the irresistible brightness of Catholic light, and preparing for that terrible struggle against God, his Christ, and his Church, of which the Scriptures tell us.

*Ques.*—I cannot understand why the brightness of Catholic light should cause such an outbreak of the powers of darkness.

*Ans.*—Have you never observed the fury which is kindled in all proud, obstinate minds, by language which exposes the folly of their ideas and claims. Such is the fate of the Catholic Church.

By clearly demonstrating the right of the Almighty to govern our souls, and the impiety of our attempts to conciliate his law with the adoration of ourselves, the Catholic religion has made all those whom it has not converted its bitter enemies. You are aware of all it suffered in converting the world from the easy worship of the gods and goddesses of paganism. After the downfall of the pagan deities of antiquity, the false gods of Christianity,

from the God of Arius down to the God of Luther, next appeared upon the scene. The thousands of gods made out of the Bible have brought to life the gods of paganism in the literary world, and the countless gods of deism in the philosophical world; and it has naturally followed that at last the whole universe is God, and, finally, that each individual is God.

Now, all these false gods, and their easy religions, which might have been believed, and have kept a firm footing in society governed by reason alone, have vanished, like dreams, in the bright light of Catholic truth. Stripped, by controversy, of the few shreds of Christian truth and scientific discovery in which they had travestied themselves, and pushed to the last extremity by the Catholic champion, who has every truth at command, because he possesses the Sovereign Truth, the champions of these various systems have no resource left except pride which is the root of all error, pride in convulsions of rage and fury, gasping ferociously its last. "There shall be no god but man! Down with the God of the Catholics! Rather let hell and death triumph!"

It is thus that the Catholic Church, by casting a ray of light upon the last stronghold of error, after having destroyed its outer works, has forced that objection which is the source of all others, to appear in its naked deformity, and utter openly blasphemies fit only for hell.

This objection, you must see, can never be refuted. When once it has got possession of a man, no discussions can be of any avail until confinement and a regimen fit for furious madmen, have recalled the imaginary god to his right senses. But if Catholic truth has no power to free souls thus satanized, it possesses an infallible preservative against this evil.

*Ques.*—And what is that preservative?

*Ans.*—This fundamental dogma: *God is charity, and he has so loved mankind that he has sacrificed his only Son for them, in order that they might become the heirs of his kingdom, and joint heirs with Christ.* Let us explain this.

The infernal dogma which makes man God is only, like all other errors, a truth misconstrued. Pride, which supports this dogma, is only, like all other vices, an excess, an abuse of the lawful inclinations which God has bestowed upon us.

The error of making man a god is the corruption of this Catholic truth: *Man is destined to become the co-heir of Christ.* The corruption consists in this: denying the fact of our divine adoption by Jesus Christ, man dares to make of himself an

absolute god, and to say : "there shall be no other god but myself!"

Pride is the abuse of the esteem and love of ourselves ; therefore, the Catechism defines it as an *inordinate love and esteem of ourselves*. The abuse consists in this : instead of loving and esteeming the good which is in us as a gift of our Heavenly Father, and expecting its increase still more from the help of his grace than from a proper use of our own strength, we glory in it as though it were our own, and we seek to labour for our own aggrandizement, without God, and even against his law.

These principles explain the reason why the belief in man's godship, absurd as it is, meets with such sympathy in the human heart. In fact, ardent love, and esteem of ourselves, inspire us with a deep dread of *nothingness*, and even of the name of *creature*, which signifies *made out of nothing* ; an aversion which in itself is natural and lawful, since God, by deigning to make us heirs of his own glory, has given us a sense of our high dignity, and a horror of our origin, which was *nothingness*. No doubt, we must own that we had a beginning, and that if we possess existence, it is to the Eternal Being we are indebted for it ; but if God manifested himself to us only as our creator and sovereign ruler, we might fear, but could never love him. The contrast between his greatness and our nothingness, between his happiness and our misery, would humble and irritate us. Irritation would quickly degenerate into aversion, aversion would lead us to deny the existence of God, and such a denial would, in fact, proclaim that man was God.

How can such humiliation and irritation be prevented and dispelled ? How can we satisfy our natural esteem and love of ourselves, our lawful pride, and sensitiveness ? By faith, as I have said, in the God who *is charity*. I will show you my meaning.

The God, who created the universe by an inspiration of love ; who raised man above all visible beings, and *made him to his image and likeness* ; who conversed with him as a father with his child, and prepared him for the kingdom of heaven by investing him with supreme authority over all things on earth, who mercifully invited him to return, and received him with infinite charity, after he had, with the blackest ingratitude, rebelled—God, I say, had no attribute which could humble or irritate man ; and if, under the old law, he did not commonly take the name, it was evident he had the bowels of a Father. If he loudly proclaimed his titles of Jehovah, of Creator, and absolute Master of all things, evidently it was not to glorify himself, but to gain an

opportunity of glorifying those men who should render glory to him, despising gods made of stone, metal, or wood, which could do nothing but drink the blood of human victims. In short, Almighty God, even as he manifested himself in the old law, was infinitely worthy of adoration and love; nevertheless, if he was adored and feared, he was but little loved; so far too great was the awe men felt of his Majesty!

But the God of charity who stoops so low as even to take upon himself our nature, with all its weaknesses, that he may communicate to us his divinity, with all its perfections; the God who drinks the chalice of our humiliations and sufferings even to the dregs, in order to restore to us our rights to eternal glory and happiness; the God whose ineffable love detains him captive on our altars, to bestow upon us the *bread of life*, and the pledge of a glorious resurrection; the *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*, who realises, and teaches us how to realise, the greatest of our wishes, our own *deification*, he is, indeed, the God to reign over our souls, and of whom we ought to say, with St. Paul: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema!*\* the God who prevents and annihilates that objection, which is the source of all other objections.

Jesus Christ, *by whom truly all things consist*,† has replaced the absurd unity of Pantheism by a unity infinitely greater and more glorious for us. He says, most truly: “*I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the author and finisher of all things; I myself am man!*” But in becoming man I had but one aim—that all men should have it in their power to become what I am, to rise to the elevation in which I shall be for eternity, and to share in my kingdom and my throne.”

By what possibility can we take umbrage at so much greatness, when it belongs to the God who has vouchsafed to style us his brethren, nay, more, the members of his body, and when it depends only upon ourselves to share it with him?

How can we ever refuse submission to all that is most crucifying to pride and to the flesh in the law of a God who was crucified for our crimes? And confession, the acknowledgment of our sins to the sacred minister, which seems so terrible to unbelievers—is confession so shocking an obligation, when viewed at the foot of that cross on which the Son of the Most High expiated our iniquities by such excessive humiliation and so many sufferings?

*Ques.*—Yes; all objections vanish like smoke at the foot of

\* 1st Cor. xvi. 22. † *Et omnia in Ipso constant.* Ep. ad Coloss. i. 17.



the cross. The essential point is to induce unbelievers to examine them there, but that is not easy.

*Ans.*—It is less difficult than you imagine. There is in the cross a power of attraction which overcame the repugnance of a world far more unbelieving than our own, and verified these words: *When I shall be lifted up I will draw all things to myself.* This power is still the same. We never can repeat too often to those who are labouring for the conversion of souls: “the knowledge which you require above all others is that of St. Paul, *the knowledge of Jesus and of Jesus crucified.* Following the example of the great teacher of nations, you should penetrate as far as possible into the depths of the charity of Jesus Christ, and you will then come forth armed with sharp arrows that will go straight into the hearts of the enemies of the king of souls,\* and slay there the spirit of incredulity, which is, in fact, no more than a want of trust in God, a distrust which soon degenerates into hatred. You will gain more by repeating the seven words which proceeded from the cross, than by sounding the trumpets, echoing the thunders, and displaying the lightnings of Sinai.”

Protestantism, philosophy, and Jansenism, by giving men a false idea of God, and encouraging pride, prepared the way for Rationalist Pantheism and Atheism. In fact, what is the God of Luther, Calvin, Beza, Jansenius, and Arnauld? He is a God of fatalism, without justice, and without love, commanding impossibilities, and predestinating according to his good pleasure, some souls to remain for ever prostrate before him to glorify his capricious mercy, and others to descend into eternal fire, to serve as monuments of his unreasonable justice;—an egotistical and jealous God, who makes his elect silent and powerless slaves, the memory of whom he will not allow us to revere, and whose assistance we are not to implore. What is the God of the philosophic deist? He is the silent and inexorable God of nature, who, governing us by general and rigid laws, looks with the same eye upon the oppressor and the oppressed, upon the murderer and the victim, and pays as little attention to our prayers as to the chirping of a grass-hopper, or the noise of the waterfall. But be it observed, while thus preaching a God reigning despotically over men reduced to the condition of machines, the biblicals and the philosophers, by a contradiction highly logical and natural to error, proclaimed the independence and religious supremacy of each individual.

Thence arose in the soul a feeling of bitterness and enmity

\* Ps. xliv. 6.

to the idea of a God distinct from the universe and from man ; thence proceeded a tendency to reject, as an abuse, every religion but the worship of man. The remedy for so terrible an evil lies in the development of this definition : *The religion which is really calculated for mankind,—the religion which really deifies man, is the one which, instead of sacrificing men to the gods which they have given themselves in Heaven and on earth, has for the basis of its faith and worship, the real sacrifice of the True God, for the salvation of mankind.*

I have now unveiled the great objection which hides itself in the most secret recesses of the soul, and there raises altars to pride. It remains for me to speak of the one which appears openly, and addresses itself to our own interests.

### CHAPTER III.

*On the objection which has been repeatedly brought forward for six thousand years, and always with the same success.*

*Ques.*—What is that objection ?

*Ans.*—The same objection which seduced Eve, and the meaning of which was as follows : “ Your blind submission to the law of God, makes you nothing better than children, incapable of distinguishing good from evil ; eat of this fruit, and, by at once acquiring knowledge and liberty, you will be as gods.”

It is the same objection which was the ruin of the *sons of God*, when yielding to the attractions of the *daughters of men*, they said to themselves ; “ The family of Cain excels in the art of cultivating the earth and bringing up children ; let us therefore take to ourselves wives from that family.”

It is the objection also made in the days of David, and which he thus expresses : *The sons of strange children (the infidels) are as new plants in their youth ; their daughters decked out, adorned round about after the similitude of a temple : Their storehouses full, flowing out of this into that : Their sheep fruitful in young, abounding in their goings forth, their oxen fat. There is no breach of wall, nor passage, nor crying out in their streets. They have called the people happy that hath these things !\**

It is the objection brought forward by the last champions of the gods of the Roman empire, when Symachus, Libanius, etc.

\* Ps. cxliii. 12—15.

wrote: "It was the ancient worship of the gods which repulsed Hannibal from the walls of Rome, and the Gauls from the capitol, which subjected the whole world to our laws, and procured for Rome unexampled prosperity. What has the new religion procured us? Famine, drought, inundations, and the most dreadful of all scourges; the invasion of the barbarians." This objection gave employment to the pens of Ambrose, Jerome, and Prudentius, and procured us the twenty-two books of the *City of God*.

Finally, it is the objection with which our ears are deafened by the admirers of the pretended religious emancipation of the 16th century.

"From that time," they say, "may we date all kind of progress, whether scientific, literary, political, agricultural, industrial, or commercial." Travel over the whole of Europe, and of the new world; compare nation with nation, and religion with religion, and you will everywhere find Protestant nations pre-eminent in commercial and industrial activity, and in all that can promote the prosperity of a nation. On the contrary, what do you find in those countries where Catholicism, whose very nature is routine, arrests the progress of thought? Some unproductive riches in churches and convents, indifference and much indolence in the middle classes; and beneath all, a mass of misery, idleness, and fanaticism. The love of liberty is shown only by revolutionary tumults. In mixed populations, you may always distinguish the followers of the Reformed Church, by the superior cultivation of their lands, by the elegance and cleanliness of their dwellings and persons, by the greater dignity of their manners, by their sobriety and their freedom from the disgusting vice of drunkenness, etc."

This is what the more moderate say, and hence they conclude that, if the Catholic Church possesses great advantages over her rivals in an historical and religious point of view, these last have rendered great services to the world in temporal matters, and that if the former is useful for the maintenance of order by her respect for authority and traditions, the latter are necessary for liberty, without which authority degenerates into despotism, tradition into routine, and order into apathy.

*Ques.*—But do you not agree that there is some truth in this comparison between Catholic and Protestant nations?

*Ans.*—Yes, there is some truth, as there is in all objections; but the comparison is false in many points, and the conclusion drawn from it is utterly unreasonable.

To estimate the respective worth of Catholicism and Protestantism by the social results which they produce in the nations

professing these religions, it would be necessary to find a really Protestant nation ; I mean a nation which, not satisfied with holding the theory of private judgment, should realise it in practice, should take it as the foundation and rule of its customs and institutions, and should be able to say : " It is Protestantism which has made me what I am." Now such a nation does not exist.

You have seen (Book I. Fact 4th, ch. iii. and iv.) that Protestants follow the Catholic method exactly, in their system of religious, domestic, and civil education ; that individuals are indebted for all that they believe and practise of religion, not to their own personal researches, but to the teaching of their pastors ; that children possess such qualities of mind and of heart, as have been formed in them by their parents and masters, and that social order is preserved only by the submission of the citizens to the laws and authority of the government. These facts are of the most incontestable notoriety. Therefore, if there are nations which *boast* of being governed by the Protestant principle, there is not one which this principle has formed, educated, and governed, not one which it can point out as its own production. Besides, do you not see, that by making each individual *the judge of what he ought to believe and practise*, Protestantism must absolutely destroy all society, whether religious, national, or even domestic ?

*Ques.*—It appears to me, that by rigorously carrying out this principle, men would go to great lengths in individualism, and unsociability ; but nature would stand in their way.

*Ans.*—That is most evident. Even the most restricted species of society, that of the family, can exist only through unity of thought and feeling concerning the mutual duties of its members, and through the submission of all to the power whose office it is to maintain that unity.

Imagine a family, the father and mother of which, looking upon the religious lessons of their pastor as merely his opinions, should meditate upon the Bible, each separately, and fulfil their matrimonial obligations only according to what they there discovered ; a family, the children of which having come to the use of reason, and being capable of spelling through the Bible, should each commence to doubt everything they had previously been taught concerning their faith and duty, and should only obey their parents so far as they were convinced of the right they had to command, or of the justice of their orders ; a family, the servants of which should act also on the same principle ; and say, in answer to every order which did not suit their ideas :

"*It is better to obey God than man ;*"—finally, imagine a family, all the members of which should fulfil their social duties towards their neighbours, only according to their individual opinions and ideas ; I ask you, does it appear possible that such a family could really exist ?

*Ques.*—No, such a family never has been, and probably never will be seen : even supposing it should be formed some fine day, it certainly would be dissolved the next ; the neighbours would not need to call in the assistance of the police.

*Ans.*—And yet, you could blame this family for nothing but being really and practically Protestant. You have already given the reason why such a family never has existed : *Nature stands in the way.*

Yes, we are *Catholics by nature*, and when we imagine we have destroyed Catholicism within-us, we have in fact, only disfigured it. (See Book I. Fact 4th, chap iii.) That is why St. Paul tells us that the heretic is confounded by his own judgment. In fact, the Judge of consciences has but to say to him : "How couldst thou sincerely believe that I had granted liberty to all to judge for themselves in matters of religion, when thou couldst not allow such liberty to thy children or to thy inferiors in matters of domestic duty ? How couldst thou believe, that what would disorganise society could be employed by me as the foundation on which my religion, the end of which was to unite men, should rest ?"

Among all the nations which call themselves Protestant, there is not therefore one, to which we have not a right to say : "Every thing great, beautiful, good, or true, which you possess, belongs to Catholicism, by right of creation and by right of cultivation.

"In fact, from whom did you receive that Bible in which you pretend to have discovered reformed Christianity ? Who saved that Bible from the fury of Paganism ; and later, from the fury of Islamism ? Who preserved it from the outrages of thousands of sectarians, eager to corrupt it ? You cannot deny that it was the Catholic Church. To whom are you indebted for every positive article of your Creed, and everything truly Christian in your worship ? To the Catholic Church. Who built your most majestic temples, founded and endowed, if not all, yet the most famous, of your universities ? Your Catholic ancestors. Was it not likewise from these same ancestors that you received the greatest part of those liberal institutions in which you glory ; for example, you, O English ! your Magna Charta ? You owe your very existence, therefore, to Catholicism, which, when it made

you a Christian nation, introduced and nurtured within you, the seed of civilization and prosperity. Whatever progress you may have made since your separation, is owing to the wisdom with which the heads of families, and the heads of all civil, religious, and political corporations have reduced the liberty of private judgment to an abstract theory, and have preserved the Catholic method in the various spheres of government. What do you owe to Protestantism? You owe to it the denial of that belief and the abandonment of those practices which had been the belief and the practices of all Christian generations down to the time of your reformers; you owe to it the general enfeeblement of the remnants of belief which you have retained, your countless subdivisions and sects, and the wound of indifference and unbelief generated by the very sight of so many inconsistent and ridiculous forms of Christianity; you owe to it the destruction of all those religious and charitable institutions with which the Catholic Church had endowed you, a destruction which the most enlightened among you bitterly deplore."

I have now said sufficient to show that those nations which are separated from the Church are more Catholic than Protestant, and that the comparison, in order to be just, ought to be made, not between Protestant and Catholic countries, but between States which are entirely Catholic and states which are only partly Catholic. But in that case, where should we find an entirely Catholic State with which to make the comparison?

*Ques.*—What! do you not believe that there are any nations *entirely* Catholic?

*Ans.*—I beg you to remark, that the matter here in question is not merely *speculative*, but *practical* faith, and I ask you, where could you find a nation which could at any period of its existence, boast of being absolutely and entirely faithful in every point, to the commands and regulations of the Church. Such a nation never has existed, and never will exist, were it even composed of only a few thousand families, guided by the Apostles in person.

Do you not understand that the Catholic religion, being divine, and pointing to *the perfection of our heavenly Father as our aim*, and to Jesus Christ as our model, cannot here below exert the whole of its sanctifying power; that it is the nature of such a religion to excite men to press onward incessantly in the paths of truth and virtue, to condemn any fulfilment of our duties through custom alone, as well as that apathy and pharisaical pride which always fancy that they have done enough, and that in such a religion, the whole perfection of man con-

sists in one continual effort to attain supreme perfection? Of no man, therefore, however holy, of no assembly of men however enlightened and virtuous, can it be said: "Behold the masterpiece of the religion of Jesus Christ: it can produce nothing greater." The masterpieces of the religion of Jesus Christ, prepared and fashioned here below, acquire their greatest value only in eternity.

To sum up all that I have already said; there are no Protestant nations which are not still Catholic in their faith and practices, and in those institutions and customs which make them Christians. There are no Catholic nations which are not Protestant, precisely so far as they disobey the ordinances of the Catholic Church. Such being the case, any comparison between them with the intention of laying all the evil that is to be found in Catholic countries to the charge of the Catholic religion, and all the good that is to be found in Protestant countries to the credit of the Protestant religion, would not only be extremely unjust, but perfectly absurd. Catholicism has the right to claim all the merit of any real progress made by Christian nations, and to ascribe all their errors and misery to Protestantism.

However, it is notorious that there are nations which are sufficiently submissive to the Catholic religion to experience much of its salutary influence and deserve the name of Catholic, and that there are others which, through their hatred of the Church of Jesus Christ, and their profession of the Protestant principle, in theory at least, have more or less tested its social value. I agree therefore to a comparison between the two, and will discuss the facts asserted by the champions of Protestantism.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Whether we have reason to boast of our scientific, literary, and political progress since the year 1520.*

*Ques.*—To dispute such progress would surely be to dispute the evidence of our senses!

*Ans.*—Possibly; but we may acknowledge the fact, without considering it worthy of admiration. The progress that has been made is in fact very small, when compared with that universally made by men towards the end of the fifteenth century. The ignorant fancy that Europe was then slumbering

beneath the despotism of the Inquisition and the Papal power. Let us listen to a writer who cannot be suspected of partiality.

"At that time," says M. Guizot, "the Church, particularly in Italy, was in a state of the most brilliant development. . . . Proudly did she abandon herself to all the pleasures of elegant, licentious, effeminate, idle civilization, encourage literature and promote the fine arts. . . . In truth, when reviewing this period, and observing its ideas, and the state of its society, we might fancy ourselves in the midst of the eighteenth century in France. There was the same taste for the progress of the mind, and for every new idea. . . . At that time, the greatest exterior activity was displayed on all sides; there was nothing but voyages, enterprises, discoveries, and inventions of all kinds. At the same period, there were the great expeditions of the Portuguese along the African coast, the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama, the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, and the wonderful extension of European commerce. A thousand new inventions were made; others, already known to the few, became popular, and of use to the many. Gunpowder totally changed the system of war, and the compass that of navigation. Oil painting was perfected, and the whole of Europe filled with masterpieces of art. Engraving on copper, invented in 1260, multiplied the number of these masterpieces, and spread them all over the world. Finally, printing was invented between the years 1436 and 1482."\* We may add that the immortal canon of Frawenburg (Copernicus), after having studied at Bologna, and professed mathematics and astronomy at Rome, had just discovered the true system of the universe.

What consequences might not be expected from so much activity, and so many means of success? The senseless programme of Luther, calling in question the truth of that religious system which had elevated Europe to so great a height, and inviting all men to *reform* the religion of Jesus Christ arrested this literary, scientific, and political progress.

The noblest intellects, hitherto united in the belief of those great truths which enlighten and fertilize the labours of the mind, were now divided into two hostile armies, the one engaged in demolishing the Catholic Church, and in substituting new structures; and the other in defending the work of Jesus Christ, and in counteracting the attempts of the innovators. And what have science and literature gained by these endless

\* *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, leçon xi.



controversies? Protestant theology has been reduced to proceed from denial after denial to an open profession of contempt for all positive Christianity. Catholic faith has merely gained a few masterpieces of controversial discussion, which she did not the least require.

The numberless minds which were urged by Protestantism to search for true Christianity in the Bible, have produced, some, nothing but ridiculous sects, others, nothing but philosophical systems leading to atheism. Suppose these intellects had consecrated their talents to the cultivation of science, literature, and the fine arts, is it not certain that our progress would have been infinitely greater?

*Ques.*—It is very possible that science and literature did not profit, nay, even lost by these sad disputes. But amid all the abuses of liberty of thought in religion, do we not perceive real progress in civil and political liberty?

*Ans.*—I cannot perceive any, neither could M. Guizot, who was yet a great admirer of the religious Revolution. When extolling the benefits conferred by the Reformation, he mentions only freedom of thought, and the abolition of the spiritual power.

“No doubt,” he says, “the Reformation did not secure the mind of man from the chances of losing its liberty, or of being enslaved by various institutions; but it abolished or disarmed the spiritual power, the systematic and formidable government of the mind. Such was the result obtained by the Reformation, amid its numerous combinations. In Germany political liberty had no existence, and the Reformation did not introduce it; on the contrary, it rather strengthened than weakened the power of the princes, and was more injurious than profitable to the free institutions of the middle ages.”\*

There were then *free institutions in the middle ages*. They were even so widely spread that there was not a single Christian nation which did not possess, under various forms, some of these political institutions, stamped with the seal of genuine liberality, before the Reformation.

What were the consequences of the Reformation? It restored, for the advantage of those princes who favoured it, that political and religious autocracy which had been abolished by Christianity since the days of Constantine. It added the spiritual power of the keys to the temporal power of the feudal sword, and said to the sovereigns of the nations emancipated from *Papal tyranny*:

\* *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, leçon xii.

"Give your subjects Catechisms and Creeds, in the same manner as you give them laws and civil regulations ; place over them bishops and ministers of Christ in the same manner as you send them military governors, or chancellors of the exchequer." And history proves that from the time of Henry VIII. and Albert of Brandenburg, the grand master of the Teutonic Order down to Queen Victoria and the present King of Prussia, the Protestant sovereigns have freely used and abused the right of ruling the consciences of their subjects.

Whilst forcing the *Reformed* nations to bend beneath the yoke of the autocrats, Protestantism, by enkindling the flames of war, and spreading everywhere the seeds of sedition and rebellion, forced the Catholic nations to make a total or a partial sacrifice of their political liberty, and to seek some security for public order in the concentration of authority in one person, and in the dictatorship of monarchy. The second half of the sixteenth century was the epoch of the progressive and unlimited development of the government of a single man, on the ruins of the various national, provincial, and municipal constitutions, by which it had been tempered during the middle ages. The illustrious Balmés has demonstrated the truth of this fact.\*

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## CHAPTER V.

*That the real progress which has been made by Protestant nations in manufactures, commerce, etc., need not excite our envy.*

*Ques.*—You must, however, own that the children of the Reformation have enjoyed more worldly prosperity, and displayed more activity and skill in the affairs of this life. Now, why should not that excite a laudable emulation in Catholic countries ?

*Ans.*—Let us first explain this superiority in agriculture, manufacture, commerce, and riches, which is the boast of countries for the most part Protestant—such as England, the United States, or Holland.

Men in general are passionately eager to acquire money, and everything that can render them happy during their earthly existence. If there was not something in their souls to balance

\* See *Protestantism compared to Catholicism*, Vol. III.

this inclination, you would see wonderful effects produced by it. The only counterpoise to a passion for riches is *faith*, lively faith in treasures which are where *neither moth nor rust can consume, nor thieves break through and steal*—lively faith, which fulfills the obligations imposed by riches upon those who possess them, if they desire to avoid the horrors of everlasting poverty, and the fate of the rich glutton. Take away that lively faith which exercises such influence over the soul, and give each individual the right of making his own religious creed, confide the office of preaching the Gospel to ministers in black robes, sent by the King or Queen, and the consequence will be that the maxims of Jesus Christ, on the true spirit of disinterestedness and charity, and his anathemas against avarice and luxury, will become a dead letter. Poverty will be reputed of all vices the worst, and the worship of gold become the universal religion.

Hence, all classes will be ever making stupendous efforts to acquire riches. Agriculture will exact from the land the utmost it can produce. Industry will ransack the bowels of the earth, and bury therein whole populations, in order to extract metal and coal. The manufacturer will strive to enrich himself by the most rigid economy in every process, and will endeavour to excite in all the desires of luxury, by the perfection and cheapness of his goods. The merchant will block up the roads with his waggons, and cover the seas with his vessels, exporting the products of industry, and importing raw material. The Government will be drawn into the general vortex; it will be obliged to place all its political and military strength at the service of industry and commerce, and to be guided in its intercourse with foreign nations exclusively by material interests.

Is not this what we see in all Protestant nations, particularly England, the worldly prosperity of which is so much extolled?

*Ques.*—Yes; but in a worldly point of view, what harm can you see in these persevering struggles for worldly prosperity?

*Ans.*—I see that such violent efforts for worldly prosperity make innumerable victims, and that if they profit any one, it is the enemy of mankind. I see, and I hope to make you see, that these ceaseless efforts cause much misery at present, and may be the source of terrific woe hereafter.

Let us begin by casting a glance at the prosperity enjoyed by the favourites of fortune in these happy countries. What use is made by the English aristocracy of their incomes, which are greater than those of our sovereigns? "They spend immense sums," says M. Faucher, "in laying out parks and fields, which they people with cattle and game instead of men. They build

houses, or make galleries of paintings, libraries, and scientific collections. *They are filled with an insatiable craving to spend their money upon every luxury, until that craving terminates at last in ennui or suicide.*" \*

After these favourites of fortune, who have some difficulty in so spending their riches as not to become weary of life, what do we next behold? The far more numerous class of those who are endeavouring to acquire riches, and who are possessed night and day by the demon of hard labour and speculation. Anywhere else half these men would be honest Cræsus, who, having retired from business, would quietly enjoy their riches, and devote their attention to the promotion of literature, the sciences, the fine arts, and private or public works of charity. But there, where the man is valued only according to his means, and does not rise above *vulgarity*, unless he has ten thousand a year, riches are but a means of becoming rich, and there can be no rest either for the money or for its owner. Thus, what feverish, pre-occupied manners, what cold, anxious countenances, what silent eagerness may be always seen in this nation of money-makers! And what can be more gloomy than those smoky towns, where nothing is to be heard but the monotonous noise of machinery and the hissing of steam!

The *feeling* of prosperity which is manifested by the gratification of every desire, is not, therefore, to be found in this class. Nevertheless, the high and mighty lords of industry are of this class, for success in money matters bestows rank in the same manner as birth, according to the remark of M. Faucher: "A cotton manufactory, a mine, or a furnace is a real estate, the proprietor of which, having a share in every bank, and exercising unlimited sway over fire and water by means of machinery, possesses a less arbitrary, but far more absolute authority over his workmen than did any lord of the middle ages over his vassals. The workmen are arranged in regiments, and nothing can more closely resemble military, than these industrial colonies—their manufactory is their citadel, the chimneys are the flags, and the manufacturer, by admitting or excluding a family from his employ, exercises, indirectly, a right of life or death over each member." †

Shall we find real prosperity among these serfs of industry?

*Ques.*—It does not seem very likely, if we may judge by the description given by the author of the *Etudes sur l'Angleterre*, concerning the state of the working classes.

\* *Etudes sur l'Angleterre*, t. I. p. 27.

† *Etudes*, t. II. p. 146.

*Ans.*—M. L. Faucher has merely confirmed by his personal observations, and by the numerous authentic documents which he brings forward, what many writers, both English and foreign, have told us of the excessive moral and physical degradation of the lower classes in England. Since you have read his work, you must understand that his comparison between the feudal system existing among the industrial classes of the present day and the feudal system of the middle ages,\* is quite to the advantage of the latter.

The serfs of the period styled *barbarous*, served masters who in general did not require from them labour above their strength, or which would almost totally separate them from their families. The serfs of the nineteenth century serve pitiless machines. "There is not a moment's cessation of labour. Man is the slave of the machines, instead of being their master. The workman is a slave, obliged to regulate his every movement by those of the machine with which he is engaged; he must advance when it advances, and retire when it retires; he must vie with it in speed, and never stop any more than it does . . . . The spinner must not only remain standing the whole day, he must also continue walking from one machine to the other for the space of thirteen or fourteen hours, with his whole attention fixed upon his work, and his muscles stiffened. In this manner, he, as well as the child who has to mend the threads, walks from nine to twenty-four miles a day."†

An extra duty of the serfs of antiquity, and one often spoken of, was that of *beating the ponds* night and day, *when the lady of the castle was in the pains of childbirth*. How easy, compared to what is required of their slaves by manufactories, which are always in the pains of childbirth, and allow the mother of a family, or young children, barely five or six hours repose, when they do not oblige them to work throughout the four-and-twenty hours!

Were it not for the Sunday's rest, which the working class usually devote to the orgies of the tavern, you would see that the religion of industry re-enacts, in regard of these hapless wretches, the ancient slave-laws of Greece and Italy. "It had become a proverb," says M. Sallier, "that there should be no rest for the slave; *Non est otium servis*. The slave had no soul; in

\* M. Blanqui the elder, in his *Histoire de l'Economie Politique*, makes the same comparison. "The tithes of the present day are levied in the workshop. Our furnaces and cotton manufactories are become castles, where the high and mighty lords of modern industry dwell in golden armour."

† *Etudes*, t. I. p. 418.

Greece he was called a body, *sôma*; in Rome, a thing, *res*. He was no more than a tool (with this single difference, that he possessed the power of motion), a tool to be made use of without pause and without scruple, until worn out."\* Such, nevertheless, is the fate of a large portion of the English nation; for, according to M. Faucher, in consequence of the use of machinery in tillage, sixty-five out of every hundred Englishmen are now employed in manufacture.

Let me now ask, whether Catholic nations have any reason to admire and envy a superiority in industry and commerce, the consequences of which are summed up by the above-named author as follows: "Cannot cotton, wool, thread, or silk be spun or woven in large quantities, and cheaply, but at the price of such horrors—the destruction of family union, the slavery, decrepitude, and demoralization of children, the drunkenness of men, the prostitution of women, and the universal decay of morality and of life?"†

*Ques.*—Unfortunately, Catholic countries are not entirely exempt from these miseries, and even those which have opposed the constitutional anglo-mania, have not been sufficiently on their guard against the manufactural anglo-mania.

*Ans.*—Very true, and the *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers*, by M. Villermé, will prove to those who have no personal acquaintance with the manufacturing classes in France, the Low Countries, Germany and Switzerland, that continental Europe, in order to compete with England, has been obliged to create some of these *working negroes*, and tolerate the public sale of *children*.

The Catholic religion, by the wonderful effects of charity, and by the virtues which it fosters in a portion of the working people and in their masters, has no doubt softened the hardships of these galley-slaves of labour, but it is not the less true, that the wound of demoralization and pauperism is deep indeed, and that the ordinary strength of policy will not suffice to cure it.

In fact, the proper regulations and reformatations which are so much required among the manufacturers, and so imperiously demanded, not only by Christian charity and humanity, but also for the sake of public tranquillity, the proper regulations, I say, could not be made, as M. Blanqui has observed, without "a code of laws being drawn up, which should be binding upon all commercial nations likely to compete with each other." But would

\* See the article quoted in Book I. Fact 2nd, ch. xi.

† *Etudes*, t. I. p. 381.

such a code of laws be desired? Could it be made? Why not? he answers. Treaties have been made between different nations in order to kill men; why, therefore should not treaties be made to preserve life and make it pleasant?

Well said! But from the day when the queen of manufacturing countries should consent to restrain her offspring, and put a stop to a competition which is so ruinous to other nations, how would she feed her thousands of starving workmen, who, whenever trade slackens, begin to talk of riots, and are not satisfied with mere threats? It is evident that the British government never can consent to such a treaty, and must, willingly or unwillingly, wait for the great catastrophes which will very probably ensue.

*Ques.*—You have sufficiently proved that the material prosperity of England is, like its political liberty, monopolised by a certain class, and that it is a source of degradation to the bulk of the people. Is the same the case in the United States and Holland?

*Ans.*—I do not wish to repeat here what I have said elsewhere concerning the prosperity of the Republics of North America,\* the many objections which may be made to the effects produced by their forms of government, the advantages they enjoy, and the dangers with which they are threatened. I will here merely beg you to observe that the material prosperity of the North Americans, a prosperity undeniable and evident to all, has nevertheless produced unpleasant consequences—viz., weariness, and a restless desire of change in the upper classes, who possess riches, and a spirit of socialism in the lower classes, who do not possess them,

Riches are there also a source of discomfort to their possessor, who cannot employ them openly, as in England, in satisfying his aristocratic taste. In order not to wound the jealous feelings of democracy, luxury must be confined within doors, and consequently never be separated from its companion, *ennui*. "People fancy," says the author of *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe* (Vol. II.), that universal equality reigns in the United States, but that is a great mistake. There are different classes who despise each other, and never meet in society; and there are some houses, the masters of which have more pride than any German prince with sixteen quarterings upon his shield. The state of society never remains long the same; it would, in fact, be impossible that it could subsist any length of time without change, owing,

\* *La Science Sociale*, Liv. II. ch. ix.; Liv. III. ch. x.

on the one hand, to the excessive *ennui* of all, and on the other, to their extreme restlessness."

This *excessive feeling of ennui* in each individual, and the love of change it begets, a love of change which has been observed by every one,\* prove the truth of these words : *Man lives not by bread alone.*

It is a well known fact that the fever of Biblical, Mormonist, and Atheistical Socialism, is spreading among the masses of the American people, and that the secret societies are making fearful progress.

It is a common opinion among those who have studied the condition of North America, and among the Americans themselves, that the consequence of this fact will be that some day or other, the Congress will have to choose between military government or a violent rupture.†

With regard to Holland, I need only say that the official documents of its statistics prove, that of all the nations of Europe it bears the closest resemblance to England, the very home of pauperism. The number of its destitute poor amounts to nearly one-fifth of the whole population. One of its newspapers lately observed, that the official number of poor who received assistance at Amsterdam was one out of three, whereas at Paris it is only one out of ten of the inhabitants.‡

Pauperism ! that new word which has been invented by England, to express, not so much a new evil, as the astonishing increase of the evil of poverty, an evil as ancient as the world ; pauperism, which has spread from England all over the Continent, precisely in proportion to the efforts which have been made to multiply riches ; pauperism, whence does it spring ? From that unbridled covetousness, the cause of which I indicated at the beginning of the chapter.

The riches of the world, which are but limited, are nearly all in circulation amongst the foremost nations, and there is not much more to be found in the bowels of the earth. If you once, like Protestantism, destroy in the soul that religious faith which moderates the heat of covetousness, and promotes the charitable use of worldly wealth, money will circulate with incredible speed. With a little observation, you will perceive that this circulation has a tendency to ascend, but loses in breadth

\* See, among others, M. Gustave de Beaumont, in *Marie ou l'Esclavage aux Etats Unis*, and M. de Tocqueville, in his work *De la Démocratie*, tom. III. et IV.

† *La Science Sociale*, tom. II.

‡ The *Tijd*, quoted by the *Univers*, 21st September, 1852.



what it gains in height. In the course of time, small fortunes will be absorbed in great ones,\* and one of those immense social pyramids will be raised, on which enormous piles of gold rest on abysses of misery and unsatisfied desires.

Sooner or later, these mountains, unless reduced to their proper level by Catholic charity, will crumble, and then the waters of barbarism will overrun the land. In our days, as in the days of Seneca, *great riches are amassed only at the expense of great poverty.*† But in Christian countries, where great poverty is not restrained by slavery, as among Seneca's contemporaries, it is the destined devourer of great riches.

To have done with the old story of the superiority of Protestant nations in point of general prosperity, allow me to quote a few lines, written in 1845.‡ “In Spain, which was so filled with monks before the Revolution, the number of the poor with regard to the rest of the population was as  $\frac{1}{30}$ ; in Italy and Austria, where there were also many monks, as  $\frac{1}{25}$ ; in France, where a certain party (unfortunately too eagerly listened to) would wish there should be none, as  $\frac{1}{20}$ ; in England, where Henry VIII. has purged the country of that idle race, the poor number  $\frac{1}{8}$ —some writers say  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and some even  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the entire population. Let us add, that such a thing as the poor dying of hunger is unknown in Catholic countries, whilst in England, the public are every year informed by official reports, proceeding from different counties, that many persons die of hunger, that some are reduced to live on horse flesh, damaged corn, grass, or even the food of pigs.”—(Cobbett, letter xvi., *On the Reformation*).

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## CHAPTER VI.

*To what the other advantages possessed by Protestant over Catholic nations may be reduced.*

*Ques.*—The advantages to which you allude are probably those which you enumerated after the principal objection, namely,

\* “Small fortunes are almost unknown in England; moderate fortunes are disappearing; large fortunes alone survive the struggle, and all around them is like a desert.”—*Etudes*, tom. I. p. 428.

† *Ex multis paupertatibus divitiæ fiunt.*

‡ *Solution of Great Problems*, vol. III. p. 341.

that there is more order, cleanliness, and dignity to be found in Protestant nations, and less inclination to the degrading vice of drunkenness.

*Ans.*—Yes. Let us see in the first place how far these alleged facts are true.

As we are now speaking of the masses, no one can deny that England cannot boast of the decency, dignity, cleanliness, and sobriety of its working classes. Indeed, the habits of the working classes in regard to everything the most opposed to these virtues are such that they can be compared to nothing but themselves.

England need not bring forward the misery, filthiness, and drunkenness of the Catholic population of Ireland; England which, since the Revolution of 1688, has exercised over that unfortunate nation the most execrable tyranny ever witnessed.

Even if we admit as a fact, *that the Protestant populations are superior to the Catholic in the outward care of their persons, and all that can promote their comfort*, do you think such an advantage would be without any inconveniences, or that it could furnish grounds of accusation against the social influence of Catholicism?

*Ques.*—The care of our person, and attention to its comfort, are certainly only a minor part of a good education; but I think, nevertheless, that they are real advantages, and a sign of progress; also that they furnish some grounds for the reproach made against Catholicism, that it favours the apathy of its followers, by not sufficiently stimulating them to personal exertions.

*Ans.*—Certainly the Catholic Church does dispense her followers from the sublime task of *inventing, or discovering the religion of Jesus Christ for themselves*; but after what we have seen in the two preceding books of the obligations imposed upon a Catholic, you must, I think, perceive that the accusation that the Church encourages the apathy of her children is most unjust.

Catholicism being a dogmatical religion, that preaches doctrines which tend to elevate man to the highest perfection, no one can, without the greatest injustice, ascribe to it those vices and faults which it condemns. The Protestant religion, on the contrary, by constituting each individual the judge of what he ought to believe and practise, becomes responsible for all the irregularities which are authorised by this her principle. The Catholic falls into sin; only because he refuses to use, or misuses

the means of sanctification offered him by the Church—that is to say, he is wicked in proportion to his disobedience to her commands. But a Protestant leading ever so disorderly a life still remains a good Protestant, if he can rest himself on some passage of the Bible. The Mormon, or *Latter-day Saint*, who has thirty wives at a time, and believes that every thing in the world has been given to him, is a true and legitimate child of *private judgment*. To say that he abuses the principle, is folly. Wherever there is no fixed rule to decide the proper use to be made of a principle, the word *abuse* is without meaning.

Having made these preliminary observations, let us now come to the fact itself, and remark in the first place two things : 1st. That Protestants are in general better in reality than in theory, thanks to the small use they make of their religious principle. 2nd. That Catholics are in general not near so good as their religion, owing to their making no use, or at least an insufficient use of it.

Let us also observe that the Protestant principle, however pernicious in its ultimate consequences, exalts each individual in the first instance, by requiring great things of him. "Take," it says, "this book, which contains the doctrines of Christ, and become the high priest of your own religion ; for it is the will of Christ to arrange all your religious concerns with yourself alone, without the intervention of man !"

Must not such language, which is really held to students and to educated persons, if not to the bulk of the people, give each individual a very high opinion of himself ? Must not all young men and women who seriously undertake the office of *discovering the long-lost religion of Christ*, entertain the deepest respect for their personal dignity, and intellectual powers ?\* And when the young discoverers in Revelation meet Catholic youth, must they not maintain a proper distance between the makers of Christianity, and the slaves of ready made Christianity ?

*Ques.*—I suppose you are alluding to the proud, stiff, self-satisfied air, which is generally observed in Protestant populations, particularly in the sect which *argues* the most, Calvinism ?

*Ans.*—Yes ; Protestants call it *dignity*, and Catholics, *pride*. Without giving any decision concerning the two definitions, I merely state the fact, and I think I can explain it by saying :

\* "What Rousseau said of science, may be applied, by changing a single word, to religion ; he wished every child to *invent* science ; now we wish every man to find out his own religion."—M. le Ministre Vinet, *Essai sur la Manifestation des idées Religieuses*, p. 390.

All true Protestants are popes from the time they come to the use of reason, and they have much more to do than the Pope of Rome, since he has only to preserve the religion of Christ, and they have to discover it; we need not therefore feel any surprise at their grave and anxious appearance.

On the other hand, the feeling of security which a Catholic must have in being taught by his Church a religion ready made and so rich in means of sanctification, is apt to degenerate into carelessness. In religious affairs, as in the affairs of this world, a man in possession of great abundance is inclined to rest, and a portion of the Catholic universe bear a strong resemblance to the inhabitants of those countries, where nature has been so bountiful that man has no need to be industrious. The certainty of always finding ministers of Christ ready to break the bread of eternal life, makes men less anxious to receive it. The inexhaustible resources of charity, which justify the proverb that *no one dies of hunger in a Catholic country*, likewise contribute to encourage laziness. All this is true.

Now, if you wish to know what are the final consequences of the two systems, they are these :

Protestantism, by requiring too much from each individual, and commanding him to do what is impossible (to find out true Christianity in the Bible alone), obtains nothing from the greatest number, who are at the mercy of all visionaries and so-called prophets, until they say that all religions appear to be folly; and henceforward they devote themselves exclusively to the worship of their temporal interests. The distinctive character of this worship is individualism, the religion of self, of our own homes, a second edition of the religious principle: *Every man to himself*. Men possessing great riches, which are always acquired at the expense of great poverty, take possession of the land, and erect buildings, some of which are extremely sumptuous, others merely comfortable. They lay out good roads all over the land, and spare no pains to banish any appearance of poverty from the neighbourhood of their dwellings. There will be constant associations for commercial and industrial enterprises, for raising manufactories and warehouses, and for making ports and docks, &c. ; but in vain will you seek for any public monuments or national buildings bearing the Christian stamp of the love of God and men. I have already said that with regard to magnificent edifices consecrated to religion, benevolence, or public education, Protestant countries have little but what they owe to their Catholic ancestors. Whatever they have undertaken in this kind has either failed, or been

spoiled by parsimony, according to a celebrated English writer.\*

Charity has there become a *tax*, an act of obedience to the laws. The pauper there receives the loaf of bread, which cannot be denied him by the feeling of humanity always remaining in a Christian country, and the exigences of public security; but the tender solicitude and devotedness of charity are unknown.

Very different is the spirit of those nations to which the Church is incessantly recalling the maxims and example of our Saviour: *Man lives not by bread alone. . . . Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting. . . . Seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all the rest shall be added unto you. . . . What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Woe to you, rich, who have your consolation here below! . . . . It would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter heaven. . . . . No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon. . . . Be you always ready, for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come, etc.* If less labour is bestowed in these countries upon the means of making money, it is because a portion of the industry of the inhabitants is employed in the care of their souls, and the acquisition of those treasures which rust cannot consume. The attention bestowed upon the inner man, the care required for the preservation of the life of the soul, cause them to care less for outward things, and for what flatters the senses, that so they may not incur the anathema: *Woe to you, because you make clean the outside of the cup, and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness! \**

The blood of Jesus Christ, ever flowing on our altars for the

\* It is said that Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of St. Paul's, had numerous difficulties to contend with, during the course of its erection, and always concerning the expense, even after the plan of the building (a plan he by no means approved of) had been adopted on account of its being the most economical. . . . The dome is made of wood, and consequently cannot last long; whereas that of St. Peter's at Rome, though twice as large, is made of stone. . . . St. Peter's cost fourteen million pounds sterling, St. Paul's did not cost one million. If the Pontine Marshes had been in England they never would have been drained, the bare idea of such an expense would have terrified the Parliament. The Romans attempted this great work three several times during the Consulate of Cethegus and the reign of Julius Cæsar, . . . and these attempts, though made when this powerful empire was at the height of its prosperity, were always unsuccessful. . . . This great work was reserved for the late Pope Pius VI., who undertook, and accomplished it, during the first eighteen years of his glorious Pontificate."—(Fitz-William.)

† Matthew, xxiii. 25.

salvation of mankind, maintains amongst them a spirit of self-sacrifice, and fills them with a sublime spirit of devotedness. Out of these masses of people, who are called so apathetic, there are constantly issuing forth legions of heroes and heroines, who hasten to lands situated fifteen or sixteen thousand miles away from their own, in order to convey the glad tidings of the Gospel to infidels, and receive in exchange the crown of martyrdom.

*Ques.*—In answer to this, Protestants would bring forward their Evangelical societies, and the great sacrifices they make to promote them.

*Ans.*—Their pecuniary sacrifices are certainly very great, and if gold could convert the world to Protestantism, the conversion would soon be effected. The immense sums annually received, according to the annals of the Bible Society, so far back as 1841, show the high price set by the missionaries on their self-devotion; a self-devotion which consists merely in distributing Bibles, together with other merchandise, where there is no risk in such a trade. Millions and millions of Bibles and Religious Tracts are thus distributed, but converts, of course, there are none.\* It is evident that the more intelligent portion of the members of the Bible Society have but one end—the destruction of Catholicism; and this has been lately owned by one of the first Protestant writers. “Let us not weary,” said M. Vinet, “of distributing this book (the Bible): let us oblige every one to open and read it; let it be met with everywhere; let no one be able to avoid it, let it constantly rise again from its own ashes; let it increase in defiance of the bulls which interdict it; let the whole Christian world be deluged with copies of it; let thousands and thou-

\* The Catholic Church has numbered her martyrs in China, and other Pagan countries of the East, by hundreds—nay, by thousands, from the time of St. Francis Xavier down to the present day. Missionaries and converts together have been *hated and persecuted and brought before kings and councils, and put to death for the name of Christ*. They have suffered joyfully, and as in the early days of the Church, the blood of martyrs has everywhere been the seed of Christians.

Let the Bible Society show its martyrs and its converts! How many Protestant Missionaries have there been in countries hostile to the Christian religion, such as China? Are they to be found there at all, save perhaps on the sea coast, under the protection of the British flag, and where there is no danger of persecution, and but few difficulties to be encountered?

Let the candid reader say which Church bears distinctive marks of belonging to the *Good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep*, and which Missionaries follow in the footsteps of the Apostles, by *preaching the Gospel in the whole world, to every creature*, and together with their disciples, *rejoicing to be accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ*! Tr.

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sands of echoes repeat its words. Catholicism has not yet been put to this trial, let us see how it will endure it."\* Let us now leave the sacrifices of money made by heresy in order to gratify its hatred of Catholicism, and return to the personal sacrifices inspired by Catholic charity.

Catholic charity is not satisfied with giving superfluous riches, or even with depriving itself of necessities, it gives everything, immolates its very self, and makes itself all to all; it becomes lowly with the lowly, that it may raise them up; ignorant with the ignorant, to instruct them, suffering with those who suffer to console them, poor with the poor, a beggar with beggars, to diminish the two great sources of poverty and mendicity, the hard-heartedness of the rich, and the degradation and immorality of the poor. Such is the spirit which animates our priesthood,†

\* *Supplément au Narrateur Religieux*, p. 129.

† The life of the blessed Peter Claver, S.J., who was beatified in 1851, may serve as an example of the spirit of supernatural self-devotion with which the Catholic Church inspires her children. In joining the Society of Jesus, Claver sacrificed nobility of birth, and what the world would have called the prospect of the most brilliant career; but he did yet more. He entered, by his own desire and at his own request, upon a thankless mission of unparalleled labours; he became the Apostle of the Negro slaves of South America, who were then in the most wretched state of misery. At Carthagena, his life alternated between the hold of the slave-ship and the infected prison-house where the slaves were lodged. Hour after hour did he pass daily in the suffocating air of these abodes, tenderly nursing the sick from whose pestilent touch their very fellows shrunk—instructing, exhorting, baptising; one long monotonous round of labours consuming his days for the space of forty years. Every morning, as soon as the Jesuits' Church opened, F. Claver took his place in the Confessional, in order by the administration of the Sacrament of Penance to the Negroes, to keep the spoils won from the kingdom of Satan. The church was damp and hot, and the rays of a tropical sun beat on it till mid-day, yet he never went away till it was time to say the last Mass. On festival days, and in Lent, he began his labours at break of day, and never rose till at least eight hours had passed over his head. When Easter came, his only relaxation was to leave the town to seek for the negroes scattered among the mountains, and on foot he climbed mountain sides, or waded through marshes and ravines. Before he died, four hundred thousand negroes, taught by his own lips, and baptised by his own hands, bore witness to his incredible labours. The white man fully as much as the black bowed down before his mighty influence; his single voice stemmed the flood of sin—one and all, down to the very buccaneer, found the goodness of God impersonated in Father Claver. The spirit of Almighty God alone could have carried a man through the complication of evils Father Claver had to face, or have borne him triumphantly through the incessant war he had to wage with the selfish vice of the white man and the brutality of the black. It was charity, the love of God and of souls, which was the secret and source of his power; it was a spark from the heart of Jesus that had set his heart on fire and burnt steadily, where a mere earthly flame would

and our religious orders of men and women, and from them overflows into our innumerable charitable institutions, among others, the *Confraternity* of St. Vincent of Paul, which may be called the *third order* of Catholic charity.

And what are the social consequences of this unceasing universal war against egotism? The different classes are brought nearer to each other, and filled with a mutual spirit of charity, and there never is that excessive and revolting inequality of rank and fortune which is found in Protestant countries, particularly in England.\* Those who are in easy circumstances being less feverishly anxious to speculate and acquire greater riches, afford the lower classes opportunities of making money, and do not require an order from the magistrate to come to the assistance of the poor. The proprietors of large estates, who live in sumptuous dwellings, willingly permit the vicinity of humble cottages, and do not reduce small farmers and landed proprietors to the hard necessity of emigrating, (as has been done elsewhere), or dying of hunger, by saying to them: "You only vegetate here, and keep up misery in the country; go and make a fortune elsewhere, I will pay your expenses: I want your land to enlarge my park, and increase my stock."

There is place for all under the sun of the Catholic Church; if there are among us fewer and less elevated mountains of gold, the abysses of poverty are also less deep and forlorn. Riches being thus more equitably divided and more widely spread, there reigns, indeed, a sort of general mediocrity, which deceives superficial observers, and gives an appearance of truth to the error: that Protestantism has been more favourable to the temporal prosperity of its followers. Good sense tells us that the richest nations are those where there are the fewest poor.

have smouldered away. No one can study the life of Father Claver, and not perceive that his character was such as earth cannot produce. He is but one bright example out of many which the Catholic Church holds out to us for our admiration and imitation, and surely it is a mark of Heavenly power, of more than earthly strength in a Church, when she sheds upon her children graces which result in deeds utterly beyond the compass of the known powers of nature. And yet she who is the mother of Saints is styled by her enemies, Anti-Christ, and the mother of sin! Must not such calumnies be spread solely at the suggestion of him who is the enemy of truth, *the liar from the beginning*—the *Father of lies*? Tr. From the *Clifton Tracts*.

\* "There is no country in the world where the different ranks of society are so widely separated from each other."—*Etudes sur l'Angleterre*.



## CHAPTER VII.

*That the Catholic Religion procures its followers the most precious of all earthly treasures.*

*Ques.*—What is that treasure?

*Ans.*—The treasure which Jesus Christ promised his faithful disciples. *Take up my yoke upon you . . . he said, and you shall find rest to your souls.\** The peace of the soul, *the secure mind, which is like a continual feast,†* the sweet *certainty* of being in the right road, and under the guidance of God himself, is the treasure which the Catholic Church procures for all who submit to her teaching.

I said that it was the most precious treasure we can possess in this life. In fact, whither do all our desires tend? What is it that we seek in learning, in power, in riches, or in pleasures? What but to satisfy the longing desires of our heart and soul? And as our soul is infinitely greater than any of these things, it remains unsatisfied, and in a state of alternate agitation and weariness, so long as it does not place itself under the guidance of the Eternal Pastor of souls.

Now it is the especial privilege of a docile Catholic to know that he is under the guidance of God. He has proofs of it, not only in the divine marks which distinguish that Church to which Jesus Christ has said: *He that heareth you heareth me. . . . Behold I am with you all days, etc.,* but also in that joy diffused by the Holy Ghost in his soul, and in *that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding;‡* that peace which Jesus Christ bequeathed to his disciples when he said: *Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you,§* that peace which is the fulfilment of these other words: *If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.||*

The feeling of entire security which our blessed Lord infuses into the souls of those who are members of his Church is, as it were, the argument *ad hominem* which he gives them; a personal demonstration that he is with them, and that they are in the true road leading to eternal life; a demonstration which, resting as it does upon well known facts, fully agreed to by the conscience, excludes reasoning, and produces a conviction proof

\* Mat. xi. 29. † Proverbs, xv. 15, ‡ Philipp. iv. 9.  
§ John xiv. 27. || Ibid xiv. 23.

against all the objections of infidelity, and the violence of persecution. This it was that filled the souls of the martyrs with joy, and gave them strength to endure the loss of liberty and of fortune, and the most frightful torments. *If God is with us, they said with St. Paul, who shall be against us? He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also with him, given us all things?* And what can ever prevent him from restoring us a hundred fold all that we have sacrificed for his glory?\*

It is this also that rejoices the hearts of all who are docile to the voice of the Church, and makes them run on with joy in the narrow path of the Commandments. The children of this world and of heresy often marvel at the calmness of soul experienced by Catholics in the performance of duties which seem the most repugnant to nature, and they know not how to reconcile such evident happiness with the practice of so many painful duties. To such you must say: "this is the best possible refutation of your prejudices against these practices, and a palpable proof of their divine efficacy. Instead of listening to those who *blaspheme because they do not understand*, fix your attention upon those who follow these practices, and you will behold engraven upon their brow the canticle which the Royal Prophet put in the mouth of the children of the New Covenant. *The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment: he hath converted my soul. He hath led me on the paths of justice. . . . For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff† they have comforted me. Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!‡ And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days.*" (Ps. xxii.)

Let me ask whether this peace of soul, this feeling of security afforded by the Catholic Religion concerning the all-important affair of our eternal lot, is not an inestimable treasure, and well worth the sacrifice of some worldly advantages?

*Ques.*—Yes; but this peace of the soul is possessed only by those few Catholics who are faithful to every duty; as for the rest, they enjoy no more peace than the Protestants, and even less, for they must feel conscious of their disobedience to the voice of the Church.

\* Rom. viii. 31, 32.

† The Cross.

‡ The Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

*Ans.*—No doubt, *the peace* of which we have been speaking is *the work of justice*,\* and as the Apostle says, *tribulation and anguish are upon every soul of man that worketh evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*†

A non-practising Catholic is deprived of all religious consolations, and is at war with his own conscience; but he at least knows where to find the religion which calms and comforts the soul. The only question he has to address to himself concerning religion is the very simple one—"When shall I make up my mind to do that which I shall wish to have done at the hour of death?" He is a disobedient, prodigal child, prevented by idleness, business, or pleasures, from saying as yet: *I will arise and will go to my Father.*‡ But he knows the road home, and what he must do in order to be restored to grace.

It is far otherwise with the children of Protestantism, whose only common article of faith is, that Jesus Christ did not build any *house of God*, did not leave any Church divinely empowered to regenerate souls, instruct and cleanse them from the stains of sin, and conduct them in the road that leads to eternal life. For them, as you have seen, the question they must ask themselves comprises so much, that no man's life, however long and learned, would be sufficient to frame an answer. Finding themselves unable to solve the difficulty to the satisfaction of their consciences, what course do they take? Some choose the answer given by the indifferent, and say: "Let us respect all religious opinions and adopt none." Others adhere, for the time, to the ideas and religious practices which they find already established in their family or sect. That the anxieties of doubt, which outlive these determinations, may not disturb the carelessness of the former, or the temporary religions of the latter, men plunge into the vortex of business, and the fever of speculation is the antidote made use of to quiet the agitation of their consciences. You see, then, that the calmness and tranquillity enjoyed by the children of the Catholic Church is experienced even by the least docile of her children, so long as they cling to the anchor of faith, and they cannot be compared in any degree to those unfortunate beings who are delivered up by heresy a prey to the everlasting storms of doubt. Therefore, Catholic nations are mostly exempt from that disposition to sadness, *that excessive weariness and restlessness, that craving to spend money upon every pleasure until it ends in ennui or suicide*, which is so common among the children of private judgment. (See Chap-

\* Isaias, xxxii. 17.

† Rom. II. 9.

‡ Luke xv. 18.

ter V.) I must here add another reason to those I have already given, why perhaps the children of faith care less for *the fat of the land*, and are less amply provided with the gifts of fortune, and this reason, which must have great weight in the judgment of a Christian, is that sheep, docile to the voice of the Eternal Shepherd, are especially cared for by their Heavenly Father.

*Ques.*—And what mark of predilection do you see in the fact of those people who are faithful to God being left in a state of temporal inferiority?

*Ans.*—I see the predilection of the Eternal Father for the Divine Model of the Elect, who was born in a stable, and terminated a life of suffering and privation upon Mount Calvary.

Consider these words uttered by a voice from heaven over Jesus Christ, upon the day of his baptism: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.\** Compare them with these other words of St. Paul: *Whom God foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son. And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified;†* and you must be convinced that an abundance of temporal wealth is far from being a certain mark of divine predilection.

As Jesus Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life*, and as *no one can go to the Father but by him*, must we not acknowledge that riches are what he styled them, a burden, an encumbrance, a snare in our path, and a great obstacle to our progress towards our last end? Nothing, therefore, can be more worthy of the goodness of the Father who has created us for heaven, than to diminish the load that weighs us down to the earth, by granting the prayer which he himself prompted: *Give me neither beggary nor riches, give me only the necessities of life, lest, perhaps, being filled, I should be tempted to say: Who is the Lord? or, being compelled by poverty, I should steal, and foreswear the name of my God.‡*

Let God abandon the goods of this world to those who desire no others, and who say to him: *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what doth it profit us that we pray to him?* Let sinners see their riches multiply in their hands, and enjoy them in that profound peace at which Job and David wondered;§ let nothing disturb the curse of their prosperity; let them even be spared the pains of the last agony, by a quick and easy death.||

\* Math. iii. 17.

† Rom. viii. 29, 30.

‡ Proverbs xxx. 8, 9.

§ Job xxi. 7—13; Ps. cxliii.

|| *Et in puncta ad inferno descendunt.* Job. xxi. 13.

Yes, if we behold all this, let not our hearts be troubled ! By refusing to enter those supernatural paths which, by God's ordinance, lead to eternal salvation, men reduce themselves to the level of beasts, and, like the beasts which they resemble, are well fed down to the very day of slaughter. Besides, divine justice, which leaves nothing unrewarded, beholding in them some natural virtues of no avail for eternity, which, therefore, ought to receive a recompense here below, bestows earthly treasures upon the children of the earth. Thus, as St. Augustine observes, the virtue of the ancient Romans merited for them the empire of the world.\*

Very different is the conduct of the Almighty towards those men who enter on the path of his commandments, but who are exposed by their weakness to the danger of slumbering, turning back, or being fascinated by the idols of the world. He reproves and checks them by the voice of his ministers, and by the cries of conscience. When a reprimand is not sufficient, he makes use of some chastisement; he strikes them in the objects of their affections, in their wealth, their children, their flesh, or their minds. *I will visit their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes. But my mercy I will not take away from them.† Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise.‡* Among those who will receive a crown of glory, how many will be obliged to exclaim with David : *The Lord chastening, hath chastised me, but he hath not delivered me over to death.§*

Almighty God pursues the same line of conduct with regard to whole nations as to individuals. When the guardians to whose care he has confided them have fallen asleep, and the enemy has sown amongst them the cockle of error and sin, he visits those nations in his justice, he lets loose the tempest's blast upon them, and then the fire of revolutions is not extinguished until it has effaced every stain.

I have now said enough upon *the great objection which has been continually brought forward from the beginning of the world*. You must understand that the best answer that can be made to it is the one given by David, who, after having described the temporal prosperity of the *strange children* in the terms I have already quoted (Chapter III), thus concludes : *They have called the people happy that hath these things; but happy is that people whose God is the Lord!*

\* *De Civitate Dei*, lib. V. cap. 12 et 13.

† Ps. lxxxviii. 33, 34.

‡ Apoc. iii. 19.

§ Ps. cxvii. 18.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Two short methods of putting a stop to all objections against the Catholic Religion.*

*Ques.*—What are those methods?

*Ans.*—The first is to *take an exception* against all objections, and the second to allow them to refute themselves. Let us commence by examining the first, which alone lies in our own power. In order successfully to oppose all objections by not admitting that they are such, we must appeal to the tribunal of the great judge of all human babble—Death!

In fact, whence do all the objections to the Catholic religion tend? To show us that it is an ill-made religion, and must be reformed.

In what way do men endeavour to persuade us of this? In two ways. Sometimes they appeal to our reason against the pretended contradictions of the Catholic faith, and the conclusion is: “You cannot believe without being devoid of sense.” Sometimes they appeal to our feelings against the duties of a Catholic, and then the conclusion is: “You cannot believe and perform without being unhappy.”

You may shorten all disputes with these clever reasoners, by saying to them: “All your arguments will not prevent us from dying. Now, so long as we remain subject to death, the idea of discovering a better religion would be, in a Catholic, the height of madness.

“To make a religion for ourselves! do you really know what you are saying? The word *religion* signifies, in every language, a *divine law*; and what is the good of a religion which does not regulate the employment of life, and reassure us, when we reflect upon the awful mysteries which death hides from us? It is a term without meaning, of use only to hypocrites. Religion is a practical law, which is to guide our steps from the first dawn of reason, from our very cradle, even to our grave; it must, therefore, necessarily come to us from without, like the light which enlightens our eye, or the food which supports our bodies. The advice to invent a religion is about as wise as would be the advice to invent light and food. Supposing I was really bound to perform this task, I should require two things: the time necessary for performing it, and the time necessary for profiting

by it, so as to become what God and my own conscience require me to be, a religious man. If you cannot secure me both these things, the task you impose upon me is worse than foolish. You say that I must be devoid of sense to believe what I cannot perfectly understand, and what, according to you, is contrary to reason. If you can explain all the mysteries of reason, and remove the blindness of our intellects, do so. Until then, I shall, in common with the whole Catholic universe, believe all the mysteries of the Catholic Catechism; and if, as undoubtedly is the case, our globe bears on its surface a large number of fools, I shall have a hundred good reasons for thinking that neither I nor my brethren in faith have the honour to be of that number.

"You tell me, likewise, that by practising my religion, I deprive myself of many pleasures, and make myself unhappy. In the first place, I should be glad to know what pleasures can supply the place of that spiritual happiness which can be found only in submission to the Church of Christ. I should like to know whether there ever was in this world a Catholic who lost this peace of the soul by believing and practising his religion, or who found it by becoming an unbeliever. And yet, because I make known the state of my conscience to a priest, because I fast, according to my strength, on the Ember Days, on certain Vigils, in Advent, and during the whole of Lent, because I abstain from meat on certain days, and because I keep a guard over my eyes in the presence of my neighbour's wife or daughters, you say that I make myself unhappy. Even supposing that these practices did not bestow more happiness upon the soul than they deprive the body of, you would still be too hasty in your conclusions. Confessions, fasting, abstinence—all will come to an end at the moment of death, that is to say, perhaps in the course of an hour, or a day; at the latest, in the course of a few years. But I feel certain that my existence will not then terminate, and that death will be the commencement of an immortal life. In order to decide whether I am unhappy or not, you must measure the whole of my existence, of which you can see only a very small portion.

"You ask me what security I have of eternal life? My security, besides the universal belief of mankind, is the word of Jesus Christ ever teaching me through the universal Church; and with such a security, I could feel courage enough, by the help of God's grace, to profess this faith amid the severest torments, as has been done by so many thousands of Christians. But what security have you that the two eternities, one of glory and happiness, and the other of ignominy and fire, are but idle

dreams?—Your word? Your reason?—They are not sufficient to balance the word and reason of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the whole Christian world. Your works? Ah! when I compare them with the works of Jesus Christ, and of his followers, I find there ample proofs of the two eternities!

“Speak you of the *sleep of nothingness? of utter extinction?* Such an idea of futurity is so mournful, so frightful, that the consciences of all men have ever rejected it as the dream of sin, and I can scarcely admit it in regard to even animals that are dear to me. Since utter extinction is all you can promise to those Catholics whom you are endeavouring to deprive of the treasure of faith, their greatest consolation, believe me, your endeavours are those of an evil spirit and a malignant heart, and if your soul, instead of returning to nothingness, appears one day before the tribunal of a crucified God, you will have prepared for yourselves an awful retribution!”

What is your opinion of this method which I have called a *short one*, because it dispenses a person from entering into the labyrinth of objections,—a labyrinth which was first begun in the earthly Paradise, when death entered supported by *objections*, and which will end only in that Heavenly abode where truth and life, appearing in all their plenitude, will destroy for ever the work of error and death?

*Ques.*—This method is certainly very proper to confound those false teachers who endeavour to persuade us that our religion must be new-modelled: but might not heretics avail themselves of it, as an excuse for not seeking the true religion, and say: “Life is too short, and the time of my death too uncertain, for me to seek any other religion than that of my fathers?”

*Ans.*—If you reflect a little, you will see that in order to make use of this method, it is not sufficient to bring forward death; you must also be supported by *the Church of the Living God*.

In the whole course of this work, and particularly in the first Book, I think I have clearly established, that in point of religious conviction, there is the widest difference between a well instructed Catholic and a well instructed member of any of the separated Churches. The former has no need of any research, to make sure that his religion is not the work of his father or grandfather, nor that of one or many of the numerous nations which profess it. With a single glance he sees, that his Church dates from the Christian Era, and has no other beginning in history than that of Christianity itself, no limits save those of the world. The more he contemplates this immense spiritual society, the foundation and preservation of which imply a thousand



human impossibilities, the more does the conviction of its divine origin increase in strength, till to him doubt is folly. It is not thus with the member of any of the separated Churches. In vain may you tell him that his is the true Church; if he is well instructed, (as I suppose him to be), and not one of those reprobates who are determined to know everything except religious truth, it is impossible for him not to perceive that his Church bears three distinctive marks, that must excite his doubts. 1st, His Church bears the national stamp. His ancestors may not have been sufficiently candid to call it *the Church by law established*, as the English have done; still it is no less evident, that it is a *national establishment*, and that if he crosses the frontier, he finds a different Church. How can he reconcile that with his faith in *the Catholic Church*, words which his co-religionists did not dare to retrench from the Creed? 2ndly, His Church dates from a period, which leaves a wide interval between its commencement and the time of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. 3rdly, Among the different titles and patronymics borne by his Church, the names of men and women are continually recurring: Photius, Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Elizabeth, etc. No more is required to render some examination necessary, and it is impossible for a conscientious examination not to increase doubt.

Does the child of schism and heresy seek to tranquillize his mind by the authority of his forefathers, in the maxim: *Every one ought to follow the religion of his fathers*—not only would this maxim have no sense in the mouth of a disciple of *private judgment*, but history will also inform him that the fathers of the first Protestants were Catholics, and that the Protestants of the nineteenth century differ widely from the religion of their fathers of the sixteenth.\*

Conscience will also whisper to him; "On the day that will decide your eternal lot, you will be judged not by your fathers, or by what your fathers may have said, but by Jesus Christ, and by his maxim: *He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.*†

By abandoning the religion of your ancestors, you do not condemn them; Jesus Christ has judged them according to their lights, as he will judge you according to yours. That sincerity which may have caused them to find favour before God, can

\* "I do not like men who change their religion," said a German Prince, in the year 1801, to the Count de Stolberg.—"Neither do I," replied the noble convert, "for they oblige their descendants, after the lapse of three centuries, to change back again."

† Mat. x. 37.

excuse you no longer, since your mind is filled with doubts. By despising the voice calling you out of darkness into light, you would be condemned, not only by our Divine Lord and by your forefathers, but also by your own conscience."

Does he hold the language you have supposed: "Life is too short, and the time of death too uncertain for me to run the risk of seeking any other religion than that of my childhood," conscience will again reply: Your life was bestowed upon you but for one end—eternal salvation; and it is essential that you should enter the road which has been pointed out by our Saviour. Even were it as difficult to distinguish the true road from the thousands of false ones as it is easy for upright and truth-loving souls, you should commence your search with courage and filial confidence in *the Good Shepherd, who has given his life for his sheep, and who leaves the ninety-nine in the fold, to seek for the one that is lost*. The essential point with regard to all who are born, like yourself, outside the true sheep-fold is, that death should find them, if not within, at least in the road leading to that fold. Next to faith, vivified by charity, a sincere desire of faith, proved by good works, will save a soul from perdition.

Perhaps you now feel that I have said sufficient to prove, that the first of my *short methods* will not be productive of any of the ill effects you anticipated?

*Ques.*—Yes: I am now only anxious to hear what you have to say concerning the second *short method*.

*Ans.*—I said that the second method consisted in *leaving the objections against the Catholic religion to answer themselves, and destroy themselves by their own victory*. But this method belongs to God, who alone can, in the counsels of his justice and wisdom, allow error and sin to triumph for a time. And he only makes use of this method at the last extremity; in fact, he raises up men powerful in word and work, in order to confound the discourses of error, so long as these discourses proceed only from a few, and are caused more by ignorance and want of reflection, than by malice.

But when the voices of the enemies of the Divine word succeed in drowning the voices of the ministers of Heaven: when the pride of unbelievers, fostered and augmented by the numbers and applause of those who listen to them, have no longer any bounds, and the ears of the multitude are deafened by thousands of echoes repeating: "Leave the priests to repeat in the solitude of the sanctuary their worn out, senseless, absurd, uncivilised doctrines, which oppose all real progress, and come to us, assist us to obtain possession of power, and we will substitute light

for darkness ; liberty and happiness shall succeed the slavery and sufferings of superstition !" When the upper classes, who are the leaders of the people, generally hold such language as this, it becomes in a manner necessary for God to say, " Let it be so, you shall have so many years to diffuse your light, liberty and happiness upon the multitude."

Then the breath of revolutions bears away every obstacle to the self-styled enlightened classes. Every means of propagating their doctrines is in their hands. If the true religion is still allowed to call together its followers in the holy places, and carry its consolations to the dying, it must confine itself to such offices, and leave to infidelity the task of instructing the rising generation. The masses for the most part join in the movement ; they desert the Catechism for the newspaper, and the Church for the club or public-house : *the Lord's day* is wholly employed in work or debauchery. The ministers of Jesus Christ, and all faithful souls, mourn and weep. The partisans of philosophical progress rejoice and exclaim : " Take courage ! light is dawning, the people are coming over to us, and we shall soon celebrate the *obsequies of the great religion* !

Yes, light has dawned indeed ! That portion of the people amongst whom a revolutionary movement takes place, are never long in perceiving the real end of all the objections to the Catholic religion. " The religion of the priesthood, which attempts to rule our souls in the name of God, is beyond question what it has been described, a work of darkness and a means of oppression. But that political religion of maintaining order which the aristocrats wish to preserve, in order to muzzle us with their laws and power, and deprive us of all the goods of this world by their right of property, is quite as senseless and far more inhuman. Let us therefore at once annihilate both these classes of oppressors of mankind !"

And forthwith large bands of plunderers, incendiaries, and murderers, assemble in secret with incredible rapidity and unanimity. If God then does not see fit any longer to postpone the execution of his judgments, that his threats may produce repentance or hardness of heart, what will follow ? The innumerable objections which infidelity has spread like a thick cloud between the sun of Catholic truth and the souls of the people, will quickly shower forth what they contain concealed within them, and *rain down fire and sulphur*. Those who have assisted and applauded the triumph of error, who have held out the religion of Heaven as a work of folly and barbarism, and as an object of scorn to the people, *sticking fast in the destruction which*

*they prepared, and taken in the very snare which they hid,\* will raise their hands in supplication, utter despairing cries to heaven, invoke the God whom they blasphemed, or wither away with fear. The land which they have sought to deprive of the knowledge of God, is now a land of cursing and lying, and killing, and theft, and adultery, and where blood hath touched blood.†*

Does not this remedy appear to you the shortest and most efficacious that can be employed against the deluge of objections and blasphemies, when that deluge threatens to swallow up even the elect?

*Ques.*—Yes, certainly; to set fire to a whole kingdom, and put to the sword all who escape the flames would be a secure method of putting an end, not only to objections, but also to all who propagate, listen to, or combat them.

*Ans.*—Such, in fact, would be the infallible result of a decided triumph of objections over the true religion. The true religion conducts to life; therefore those objections which tend to destroy it cannot possibly triumph without leading to death. *Sin, when it is completed, begetteth death.‡* But God, whose patience rests upon eternity, never in this world permits evil, and its companion, death, to prevail more than is necessary for the production, or rather, for the disengagement of good and of life. There is therefore reason to hope that if threats are insufficient, and the storm which has been gathering for three centuries is suffered to burst upon Europe, it will only purify the atmosphere, and cast down those proud peaks, the summits of which are incased in the ice of religious indifference.

## CHAPTER IX.

*That there is felt all over Europe too great a need of Catholic unity, for resistance to it to be very lasting.*

*Ques.*—On what do you ground your supposition of this need?

*Ans.*—On three facts—viz., our material progress, the advance made by all superior minds, and the general feeling of the real people.

\* Ps. ix. 16.

† Hosea, iv. 1, 2.

‡ James, i. 15.

I. *Our material progress.*—Our progress in the means of communication is such that in ten more years Europe will be one vast city, the most distant parts of which may be reached in a few days. The inhabitants of St. Petersburg and Moscow will be able, without leaving their firesides, to hold conversation with the inhabitants of Madrid and Lisbon. The Norwegian will play at chess with the Neapolitan or Roman. The deep ocean will not present an obstacle to the electrical transmission of our words, and the bold voyages of our navigators round the world will be no more than an every-day walk. The Cape of Good Hope, Pondicherry, Calcutta, Pekin, Nangasaki, Botany Bay, etc., will be but the outskirts of the great metropolis of the world—Europe.

What, in your opinion, must be the effect (in Europe, in the first place) of this marvellous intercourse of souls, separated hitherto by distance, and exclusively influenced by national prejudices?

*Ques.*—It appears to me that the consequences of this intercourse must be an increased anxiety for pleasures and the acquisition of riches. If religious and national enmities are ever brought low, they will subside into religious indifference.

*Ans.*—Such might be the natural consequences of this universal intercourse, if God had not provided, or better, if we had not provided accordingly ourselves, by the creation of that scourge which causes religious indifference to shudder, and threatens with speedy destruction material interests—the very pillow on which it reposes.

Do you not perceive that the progress of the scourge is as rapid as that of fusion, that the electric wire transmits the orders of socialism, and that railroads and steamers transport its emissaries as rapidly as the orders and soldiers of those who combat it? Do you not likewise perceive that increased anxiety for pleasure and business can only increase the thirst for blood in the fierce passions of hatred and covetousness which it brings forward in battle array, and also multiply the sufferings of the lower classes whom it victimises? There is but one remedy which can check the progress of the scourge, viz., the progress of the spirit of religion—of the spirit of faith, hope, and charity.

Now when Europe feels the necessity of being imbued with this spirit in order to dissipate or stop the flames of socialism, in what quarter do you imagine she will seek it? Will she turn to the *æcumenical* patriarch of Constantinople, or to the Holy Synod of the Emperor Nicholas, or to the Anglican

Bishops convoked by the orders of Queen Victoria; their gracious sovereign in spiritual as well as temporal matters? Will she turn to the ten thousand synods or Evangelical Consistories of the north of Germany, Switzerland, Holland, etc., who assemble only to say: "Let us speak of war against Popery, of liturgies, singing, music, and of the means of amusing the people; but there shall no longer be any disputes about dogmas, or professions of faith?"

*Ques.*—To oppose Socialism by Protestantism would truly be like throwing oil on fire, or attempting to stifle it with straw. The cisterns of schism and heresy being dry, we must have recourse to the great fountain of living waters—Catholicism.

*Ans.*—And as this fountain diffuses its salutary waters through thousands of channels in the lands of schism and heresy, it will be within the reach of all who wish to stop the progress of the conflagration. Good sense itself must tell us that when the universal evil of irreligion has reached its height, the universal religion alone can remedy it.

No doubt, sectarian fanaticism will fiercely resist the general movement in favour of the old religion, and will abide by its maxim: "Rather death than be saved by Popery!" But the universal intercourse between nations will have deprived it of its principal weapons—calumny, lies, and ignorance. How does it now keep men in the darkness of error? By filling their minds with the most absurd prejudices against Catholicism. These prejudices are powerful in direct proportion to the distance which separates the Protestant millions from the Catholic millions. Thus, in the north of Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, where an iron legislation has kept the flock of the children of *private judgment* from all contact with the *infected sheep of Popery*, it is a received opinion that a Catholic is a being deprived of reason, and when a man has fallen into madness or idiotism the saying is: *He has become a Catholic*.

When the Lutheran consistories of Denmark and Sweden can no longer defend the barriers of intolerance which were raised by the policy of Frederick I., Christian III., and Gustavus Vasa; when the people whose intelligent minds they so grossly deceive have intercourse with the *Papists*, a revolution of ideas is inevitable, and the spiritual reign of consistories will terminate.

In like manner, when the *good souls* of the Anglican Church who in 1850 were taught by their ministers to tremble at the idea of the horrors which would fall upon England, if opposition were not made to the bull of Pius IX. re-establishing an English

Catholic hierarchy ; when these *good souls* have seen with their own eyes the deeds of the cardinals, bishops, priests, and monks, who are now described to them as cruel executioners thirsting for carnage, and finding a delicious pastime in torturing heretics and burning them alive ; will they not recover from their terror ? And then, may not John Bull, who has already been guilty of very great irreverence towards *the Church by law established*, propose to himself this question : " Why should England continue to pay more than eight millions a year to seven thousand holders of benefices, who amuse themselves by filling the heads of their congregations with the most ridiculous and hateful fables ? " Finally, will not the sight of the moral and material woes of Protestant countries, the frightful spectacle of the misery of their *paupers*, be an important lesson for those Catholics who still believe in the old story of the superior morality and prosperity of the *reformed* nations ?

It then appears to me certain that in the providential fusion which Europe is undergoing, the gold of Catholicism will shine forth brightly, and attract to itself those detached morsels which are obscured by the dross of Protestantism, Socialism being the Vulcan entrusted with the office of bringing about such a result, and annihilating the freezing north wind of indifference by the violence of its heat.

*Ques.*—You think then with de Maistre, Chateaubriand, and others, that if we are ground like wheat, it is only that we may mingle together, that we are making rapid advances towards Catholic unity, and that everything is tending to re-establish that unity.\*

*Ans.*—At the periods when those great minds announced a universal movement in favour of Catholicism, there was some merit in fore-seeing it. Now, it would be blindness to deny it. Let us proceed to the second fact :

II. *The progress made by all superior minds.*—The Protestant writer Ranke a few years ago concluded his *History of the Popes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, in the following terms : " The violent polemics of former days have been given up, if not in the schools, at least in familiar intercourse. All enmities are now called upon to be reconciled in superior unity." The conversions to the Catholic faith, which have increased in number in the scientific and literary circles of Germany, since the conversion of the celebrated Count Stolberg

\* See *Soirées de St. Petersbourg*, entret. xi.; *Etudes Historiques*, tom. IV.

(in the year 1800), form a proportion really alarming to German Protestantism, begin to enlighten the ranks of the Lutheran clergy, and contribute, together with the progress of Rationalist Atheism, to render the following axiom popular : "As to religion, we must either have Catholicism or none !" But it is in the Rome of Protestantism, long transferred from Geneva to London, among the chosen portion of the Anglican clergy, that Catholicism has made almost miraculous progress. You have no doubt heard the cries of rage, terror, and grief which the followers of the *Church established by statute of Elizabeth* have uttered over the conversion of many of its most eminent scholars and ministers to the Catholic faith.

*Ques.*—Yes ; and I think that the real or fancied conquests made in Italy by the Anglican Church, will be far from compensating for its losses.

*Ans.*—It is certain, on the contrary, that the conquests of which Anglicanism boasts will do it much mischief, and will benefit the cause of Catholicism even more than the secessions which excite so much alarm. See what Anglicanism can bring forward in opposition to the bright constellation of its learned men who now shine in the firmament of the Catholic Church—the monk Achilli, and perhaps also the monk Gavazzi. And in order that the whole world may be made acquainted with the merits of the monk Achilli, and the motives of his conversion to Protestantism, Anglican fanaticism sets on foot a famous trial, and the consequence is, a clear demonstration that the monk Achilli is an infamous seducer, pointed out and branded as such by all the tribunals and all the police of the Peninsula which he disgraced by his presence ! Let Anglicanism continue to scum the secular and regular clergy of Italy ; take from us new Achillis and Gavazzis, and give us in exchange, Spencers, Newmans, and Mannings. This is a species of free trade at which Catholics can but rejoice, so much will it contribute to the purification of the Church in Italy, and to its triumph in Great Britain. Still more even than the conquests of past ages will the future conquests of Protestantism confirm these words of a celebrated Anglican writer : "The journey from the (Catholic) Church to a sect is too frequently made the road of vice, and the journey from a sect to the Church is always by the road of virtue."\*

Yes ; *all superior minds are advancing towards Catholic unity.* The example of the great will give an impetus to the bulk of

\* Lord Fitz-William's *Letters of Atticus*, iii.



the people, and display in a clearer point of view the third fact I named: *The general feeling of the true people.*

*Ques.*—In the first place, whom do you mean by the *true people*?

*Ans.*—I mean those peaceful and more or less Christian populations, who still form the great majority of the inhabitants in Catholic countries, and even in some heretical and schismatical countries, thanks to the Catholic system of education which has always been maintained there. (See Book I. Fact iv. ch. iii.; Book IV. ch. iii.). I likewise mean a large portion of the Revolutionists, whom Socialism has seduced only by disguising itself beneath the mask of the Gospel. The *true people* therefore are all those Europeans who still live according to the religious and social principles which were implanted in them by Catholicism.

The Anti-christian spirit, which was revived in the West by *the classical school*, or *Hellenism*, more than a century before the time of Luther,\* and which paved the way for the success of that religious destruction which has been dignified with the name of *Reformation*, certainly committed great ravages; but, as I have already observed, the evil took deep root only amongst the literary classes, which form barely one hundredth part of the whole population. And besides, Christian truth has constantly numbered among its followers the brightest intellects in this minority, even in Protestant countries. It has been only during the last century that Anti-christianity has dared to show itself without disguise in the schools of the encyclopedists in the south, and in those of Kant and Goëthe in the north. From the bosom of the Protestant universities of Germany, where the history of the Gospels has been treated as a fable, and the existence of God the Creator of all things, as an idle tale, the

\* "You all know that it was during the course of the fourteenth century that Greek and Roman antiquity was, so to say, revived in Europe. . . . The classical school of the day became filled with admiration not only for the writings of the ancients, for Homer and Virgil, but also for the state of society among the ancients, for its laws, opinions, and philosophy, as well as for its literature. We must own that in politics, philosophy, and literature, the ancients were very far superior to the Europeans of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is not therefore surprising that their example was so much looked up to; that nearly all elegant, active, fastidious, elevated minds were disgusted with the rude manners, confused ideas, and barbarous customs of their day, and devoted themselves with passionate and almost idolatrous eagerness to the admiration of a state of society far more fully developed and more regular than their own. Thus was formed the school of free thinkers which appeared about the beginning of the fifteenth century."—M. Guizot's *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, leçon xi.

poison has insinuated itself more or less freely through the different universities of Europe. Weishaupt, by his free masonry and illuminism procured himself many devoted followers among the nobility and middle classes, who have powerfully served him, and serve him still in the councils and cabinets of most governments.

Finally, Anti-christianity having been favoured in these latter days by a blind system of politics, has been enabled to centralise its forces, and unite all the secret societies under the name of *Young Europe*; it has been enabled to appeal to all vices and wicked inclinations in general, and assemble armies of murderers and incendiaries, well calculated to reduce Europe by a *coup de main* to a heap of ruins. Nevertheless the Anti-christian party possesses, like all other brigand bands, a power merely artificial, and meets with no sympathy from the people. Not one county, or village, or even one family is in its favour. The destructive fury, with which the hearts of its soldiers are filled, partly dies away whenever they return to their homes. Hence its war cry: "Destruction to families!"

In short, Europe is still Christian in the general spirit of its people. Socialism has roused the slumbering spirit of faith in all souls, by mere exhibition of its infernal programme and its armies of murderers. Society at large has been surprised and terrified by the fierce cries of those ferocious bands which already were beginning to divide their bloody spoils, and like the infidel at the hour of death, it has cast away its apparent indifference, and turned to the God of its youth, invoking the assistance of Christ against the armies of hell. Now do you not see the difference there is between Catholic and Protestant populations in this revival of faith?

*Ques.*—The Catholics know what they have to hold to, in the law of the God of their youth; but the religion of the God of the Protestants—the Christ of the Bible—where is it?

*Ans.*—Yes; so long as Europe was slumbering in deceitful peace, the common people, who had been led astray for some centuries by the false teachers of schism and heresy, did not feel the want of a real, a positive, a living religion. Satisfied with those phantoms of national Churches to which the upper classes still paid some respect, they did not grow tired of believing in the old Catechisms though taught them by ministers whose unbelief was known to all except their own flocks. But now, when these phantoms of religion are disappearing beneath the cross fire of Catholicism and Socialism, and when

all intelligent minds are joining one side or the other, the bulk of the people must come over to us.

One of the following two events must come to pass ; either the movement of the bulk of the people towards the Great Church will be seconded by their political leaders, or else these latter will oppose it, and will tax their ingenuity to save their little popedoms. In the first supposition, the scourge being henceforward useless, would disappear to the sound of the Ambrosian Hymn diffusing through the world the good tidings : "Europe has now but one religion." In the other supposition, the scourge would accomplish its mission by destroying, as I said in another place, *those lofty peaks which preserve the ice of religious indifference*. You must already perceive what these peaks are. I will speak of them more in detail in the last chapter.

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## CONCLUSION

### OF THE FOURTH BOOK, AND OF THE ENTIRE WORK.

THREE centuries and a half ago, the West, having been delivered in succession from two barbarisms, and entirely remodelled by the toils and sacrifices of evangelical labourers, presented the divine spectacle of two hundred millions of men living in religious unity and equality. Popes, emperors, and kings—clergy, magistrates, nobility, and people—all equally submissive to the spiritual government of Christ, and not recognising in any man, or assembly of men, the right to make, either by addition or subtraction, the slightest change in the divine law, that is to say in Catholic faith, such as it was known even to children. The supreme spiritual power, venerated by all in the person of the vicar of Jesus Christ and the successor of St. Peter, was itself kept within limits by the divine constitution of the Church, and was only the centre and safeguard of the unity, equality, and religious liberty of all. The popes had not forgotten in their government, which had lasted fifteen hundred years, the maxim of the Eternal Pontiff : *Let him who is the greatest among you be as the servant of all !* and they were generally faithful to their title of *servant of the servants of God*.

Every one who is acquainted with the irresistible influence

of religion on the state of society in general, will see that this Christian constitution must have been an admirable guarantee of liberty and order, and an insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of religious despotism in Europe.

And how was this religious unity, so necessary for the peace and prosperity of Europe, and the divine work of preaching the Gospel to all the world destroyed? It is well known. A professor of Wittemburg, condemned by Leo X., for some theological treatises, became enraged, and invited all princes and people to fall upon the Church of the Roman Antichrist, and to make *one funeral pile* of popes, cardinals, bishops, and all their supporters.\* The greatest part of the princes of the North joined this madman, pillaged with one hand, and with the other murdered the Church of Jesus Christ in their kingdoms, fabricated such Churches and religions as would serve their despotism, and thrust their subjects into them by violence and indescribable cruelties.

However, before completing their wicked enterprise, the princes had received a warning which would have opened eyes less fascinated with covetousness and pride. Scarcely had the religious revolution begun, when the political and social revolution burst forth, applying to all secular power and property the anathemas of Luther against ecclesiastical power and property.†

With the Bible in one hand, fire and sword in the other, the Anabaptists began to pillage and burn the castles, and massacre the noble, to the cry of—"Death, in the name of Christ, to all temporal princes and lords! The land, as well as the Bible, belongs to all!" And what did the German princes and lords? Instead of seizing upon the real leader of these murderers and incendiaries, they massacred the disciples, to the number of a hundred thousand, and made an idol of the master, addressing to him these words; "Continue to excite a horror of Popery in our people; but let them understand, that it belongs to us to

\* Bossuet's *Histoire des Variations*, liv. I. ch. xxv.

† Luther, in his furious book of the *Secular Magistrate*, had declared war in open terms against all power. "Behold," he says, "God is delivering up princes to a reprobate sense; he has abandoned them; their reign is at an end. They are about to go down into their graves loaded with the hatred of mankind—princes, bishops, priests, monks—all equally worthless. What are the greatest part of those in power? Fools, or scoundrels, the greatest scoundrels beneath the sun. . . . Princes, the arm of God is suspended over your heads . . . . You are regarded as mad and worthless . . . . The people are tired out, and can no longer endure your tyranny and wickedness; neither will God, etc."—See Audin's *Life of Luther*. Vol. II. ch. ix.

crush the monster, and re-establish the true religion of Christ." Luther obeyed, cursed those of his children who fell in the struggle, declared their souls belonged to the devil, praised and elevated on high the lances yet dripping with their blood, and wrote, the day after the butchery of Frankhaussen : *It is I who have shed this blood by the orders of God, and whoever has fallen in this struggle is lost, soul and body, and belongs to the devil.* Grateful to the man who had rendered them such assistance in destroying the Catholic Church and the Anabaptist hordes, the princes ordered their servants in the religious department, and their writers, to deify the author of the new state of things in the eyes of their subjects. Their orders were fully obeyed, and even now, after the lapse of three centuries, the despicable coward who, in order to satisfy his pride, sold to a few despots the blood of Jesus Christ, the souls and the blood of the people, is still styled *the glorious Evangelist, the immortal Reformer.*

The new Popes perceived that in order to consolidate their work of destruction, they must propagate it, and that their numerous royal and ducal Churches, founded in lust and cruelty, would be called by their real name—the *sheepfolds of despotism*, if the Universal Church, founded on Calvary, were suffered to remain in contrast with them. The long and dreadful wars, which were terminated only by the Peace of Westphalia (1648), having convinced the Protestant autocrats that the sword was powerless against Catholicism, statesmen were employed to introduce schism into Catholic countries. They neglected no means of rendering them disaffected to the Holy See, and of displaying all the advantages of the spiritual supremacy of the state. At the commencement of the present century, the governments of St. James, Berlin, and St. Petersburg followed the same plan, and implored Napoleon I. to render all kings secure on their thrones, by proclaiming himself the religious head of France.\*

\* "In the conferences of Tilsitt, the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia were very urgent with Napoleon upon another subject, the same upon which he had been addressed by the English minister Pitt. Alexander loaded him with compliments upon compliments: 'You are a great man! a hero! a man raised by Providence for this time of revolutions! on you it depends to render kings secure upon their thrones; but for that end you must possess the necessary power, which you never will, unless you become what I am myself, the religious head of your states.' And during the week that Napoleon passed with the King of Prussia, the latter conversed perpetually on the same subject, and gave the same advice, *i. e.*, to make himself the head of Church and State at the expense of Catholicism. Napoleon refused to listen to the entreaties of the Emperor and King in the same manner as he had refused to listen to those of Pitt."—Rohrbacher, *Histoire Universelle de l'Eglise Catholique*, t. XXVIII. liv. 91.

After noting such facts as these, let no man ask any more what is the cause of the ravages made by incredulity among the influential classes; let no man ask whence proceeds that killing frost of indifference, which, paralysing the noblest organs of European society, has to this moment prevented the sap of Christianity from circulating within and expanding without, though it has still been gushing through the large heart of the masses. The first and principal cause has been the frightful manner in which non-Catholic potentates have openly and obstinately abused the law of Jesus Christ during the space of three centuries. What has *the perfect law of liberty*,\* which came from heaven to set at liberty and unite the members of the human family, become in their hands? An instrument of despotism, a means of oppressing and destroying the souls of their subjects, a source of lasting and bloody discord all over the West. In exact opposition to the maxim of Christ: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice*, they have been always repeating: "Let us seek first to reign without rival or control over the consciences of our people, and let us make the religion of Christ a slave to the throne." How would it be possible for this impious policy, which was no secret to any one, not to confirm among the middle classes the axiom of infidelity: *Religion, however necessary as a check on the mob, is but a means of government!*

No doubt, there is a very great difference between those most criminal princes who founded the national popedoms, and their successors of the present day, who possess them by inheritance. But it is not the less true, that these popedoms are a fearful source of scandal, and form an insurmountable obstacle to the restoration of religion in Europe, and the triumph of the Gospel in the vast continents of Asia and Africa. So long as these gigantic stumbling-blocks remain in the North, their pernicious influence will be felt from pole to pole, and all Christian efforts will be insufficient to restore Europe to its former position as the sun of universal civilisation.

Now, it is evident that these powers, hostile to the light of faith and the warmth of Catholic charity, will be first shaken, and then, if they resist, destroyed by the volcano of socialism, which they themselves contributed to form. And you must not imagine that socialism is French, Spanish, Italian, Belgian, or Austrian by origin, because it lately disturbed France, and still disturbs some Catholic countries. It is essentially Protestant,

\* St. James, i. 25.

and by birth and education a child of the North; it was in the North that it grew up in the knowledge of evil, in hatred of Christian civilization, and in the study of the theories and infernal practices of its cleverest master—the Bavarian Weishaupt. There, where all the principles of anti-Catholicism had been preached and extolled for centuries by schism and heresy, socialism had only to require their honest application. There it found all those restless desires of change, and that hatred of existing institutions, infused into the hearts of their followers by the numberless sects, which, in England, Prussia, and Russia have rent piecemeal the corpse of the official religion.

Calculate how many minds have been deranged by the different *enlightened interpretations* of the Bible, from those of the Anabaptists of Munster, down to those of Swedenborg, of the pietist Spener, the Baroness Krudener, etc.; and putting on one side the ten thousand creeds of these believers in the *New Jerusalem*, reflect upon their fundamental dogma: "Christianity, which has never been properly understood until our time, cannot display its light and life, without a total rupture with all the ideas and institutions of former ages;" a dogma which is held equally by the Pietist or Swedenborgian villager, and the *Russian senator*, whom the noble author of the *Soirées de St. Petersbourg* has fixed upon as the organ of *transcendental illuminism*. No doubt the senator and the villager do not agree in their definition of the *New Jerusalem*, but both are firmly persuaded that it can be raised only on the ruins of the present Babylon.

Consider the hatred and contempt for every Christian institution, which have been diffused through all classes by German Rationalism under its three different forms:—1st. Theological Rationalism, which has descended as low as the formula of Strauss: *Christ is a fable, and God probably but a word*. 2ndly. Philosophical Rationalism, of the school of Kant, which pretends to prove that if the universe is not God, it is impossible to know what is God, or even whether he exists at all. 3rdly. The literary Rationalism of Goëthe and Louis Feuerbach, declaring that the religion of Christ is senseless and barbarous, and the state of society organized by it execrable. Finally, consider the immense labours and the cunning organization of the German secret societies, from the days of Weishaupt to our own. See how cleverly they turn to account national antipathies and susceptibilities, stir up faithful and chivalrous Hungary to rebel against Austria, revive and give an impetus to the spirit of insubordination among the Poles who are under the dominion of Prussia, etc. Consider

what powerful branches they have sent forth even into the heart of Russia, even beneath the ice and snow of Norway, and what cordial sympathy they meet with among the industrial classes of England. Consider, I say, all this, and you will see that the North is filled with materials for a terrible conflagration.

Does that mean that we must despair of the safety of these countries? No; socialism possesses so much strength but for one end—namely, the destruction of those mountains of error, prejudice, and hatred which schism and heresy have been raising ever since the days of Photius and Luther. These nations will undoubtedly return to unity, but will it be through the care and wise measures taken by their governments? Or will it be through the fire of revolutions, and over the ruins of governments faithful to the end to their anti-Christian policy? In this lies the whole question. The choice between these two means of conversion rests with the potentates and their counsellors. Will they at length understand that socialism is nothing but the fatal development of the anti-Christian system begun by their predecessors, and that the only means by which they can preserve their earthly crowns, and obtain far more precious ones in heaven, is by sacrificing an absurd and impious religious supremacy? Will they, confiding in assistance from on high, in the firm fidelity of their Catholic subjects, and in the submission and *naturally catholic spirit* of the people who still respect them as their spiritual heads, will they, I say, *give joy before men and the Angels of God*, by the solemn declaration of this truth, which is, in fact, felt by every Christian conscience: *There is but one God and one Christ; there must also be but one Faith and one Church*. I have already said what the consequence would be—Europe would all on a sudden, find

\* “The revolution of the 16th century was brought about by a mistaken idea of the interests of sovereigns. Men denied the dogmas of the Church in order to strip her of her possessions. Now, a true idea of those interests may bring about a contrary revolution. The Protestant sovereigns must be mad not to perceive their folly in supporting a religion the fundamental maxim of which is, the right of private judgment and the sovereignty of the people, against a religion which teaches (independently of the proofs of divinity which it possesses) *that against our legitimate sovereign, even where he a Nero, we have no right to do anything but respectfully speak the truth, and then allow our heads to be cut off*. The princes, therefore, changed their religion in the 16th century in order to get money, and they will change back again in order to preserve their thrones (*if they are in time*). Nothing is so easy as to believe in dogmas which suit our dearest interests.”—M. de Maistre, *Lettres et Opuscules*, t. I. p. 276.



itself Catholic; and socialism, destroyed with Protestantism, would exist but in history.

But will the Governments of the North, instead of acting up to so wise and noble an inspiration, as we have reason to hope from their own superior talent, and the unceasing prayers which ascend towards the throne of the merciful Master of the hearts of kings, will they, can they, be so blind as to protect socialism as a useful ally in preventing the progress of Catholicism? Will Protestant fanaticism, which, through English influence, is everywhere to be seen in these days, obtain favour in the eyes of sovereigns, and bring about a re-commencement of hostilities against *the Church of the living God*? No doubt the Attila of socialism would profit by this alliance to disturb the South anew, and endeavour to wash away the shame of former defeats in a sea of blood. But all its attempts would end in nothing but awakening Catholic countries to a fuller sense of their position, uniting their leaders in a yet closer alliance, and assembling them round the divine standard to gain a new victory of Lepanto.

The child of the North, repulsed and foaming with rage, would fulfil the commands of heaven, and repay its worthy allies as they deserved, by setting fire to that train of gunpowder, the subterranean galleries of which extend from Dublin to London—from London to the Hague—from the Hague to Berlin, and thence branch off to St. Petersburg, Moscow and Drontheim, passing through Copenhagen and Stockholm.

We are well acquainted with the fearful projects of socialism in France and Italy, and whoever has studied the progress of revolutions knows that the *performance* will be infinitely worse than the *promise*. But what tongue can tell, or mind conceive, the deeds of the monster in those countries where for several ages, courts, private dwellings, temples, universities, secret societies, the pens of writers, the brush of artists, everything, in short, has combined to prepare fuel for the general conflagration? So great would be the conflagration, that the Catholic powers would probably only arrive in time to assist, with arms in their hands, at a spectacle similar to that which the city guilty of the death of a God presented to the army of Titus! Forty years ago, M. de Maistre foresaw that such must one day be the case, when speaking of England and Russia, which are, as it were, the two poles of the anti-catholic world, he said of the former: "My attention is fixed on England. You may be sure that one day such a rocket will be let off from that country as will give us a magnificent illumination,"—and of the latter: "If once the

people became disaffected, and began a revolution in European fashion, instead of making expeditions into Asia, I have no words to express what might be expected :

“ . . . . . Bella, horrida bella !  
Et multo Nevam, spumantem sanguine cerno,”\*

Let us pray, and pray without ceasing, that the light of faith and the heavenly warmth of charity may disperse the icy fog which still hangs over the higher parts of European society, and prevent the bursting forth of the flames of divine justice, and that the God of Mercy may display before our eyes the most delightful of all spectacles—the peaceful *auto-da-fé* of the melancholy errors which, by distracting the descendants of Japhet, have hindered them hitherto from diffusing light abundantly in *the tents of Sem*, and from removing the curse which still lies heavily upon the children of Cham.—Amen.

\* See *Lettres et Opuscules*, t. I. (All the works of Count de Maistre are printed at Brussels, by H. Goemaere.)

THE END.



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